BRILL

Bandit Highlands and Lowland Peace: The Mountains of Isauria-Cilicia

Author(s): Brent D. Shaw

Source: *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, 1990, Vol. 33, No. 2 (1990), pp. 199-233

Published by: Brill

Stable URL: https://www.jstor.org/stable/3632228

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at https://about.jstor.org/terms

Brill is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*

Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient, Vol. XXXIII

BANDIT HIGHLANDS AND LOWLAND PEACE: THE MOUNTAINS OF ISAURIA-CILICIA

BY

BRENT D. SHAW

(Princeton)

> Es lässt sich immer und immer wieder beobachten, dass in dieser Gesellschaft auf die Dauer kein Treuschwur und kein Vertrag... den Veränderungen der gesellschaftlichen Stärke standhielt. Die Vasallentreue regulierte sich letzten Endes immer ganz genau nach dem tätsachlichen Mass von Angewiesenheit zwischen den Verbundenen...
>
> (N Elias, *Uber den Prozess der Zivilisation*, VII, 26)
>
> Quando quelli stati che si acquistano, come è detto, sono consueti a vivere con le loro leggi e in libertà; a volerli tenere ci sono tre modi: el primo, ruinarle; l'altro, andarvi ad abitare personalmente; el terzo, lasciarle vivere con le sue leggi, traendone una pensione e creandovi drento uno stato di pochi che te le conservino amiche. Perché, sendo quello stato creato da quello principe, sa che non può stare sanza l'amicizia e potenzia sua.
>
> (Machiavelli, *Il Principe*, V)

Autonomy and domination are two constant themes of political and social life in the ancient Mediterranean. The struggle between these opposites of power has taken manifold forms. One of the more persistent was the one in which the balance of force was determined, to a considerable degree, by the simple factor of topography: the relation between mountain and plain. It is by now a commonly acknowledged truism that the historical environment of the Mediterranean has been

characterized by an oscillating play between physically dominant mountain ranges, and politically and culturally prevalent plains[1]). Because of the technological limitations on power we find in antiquity, the factor of topography militated against any permanent control of many of the more important highlands of the Mediterranean by lowland states. More than in any other case, the relationship was a negotiated one marked by a peculiar asymmetry of power that ebbed and flowed between the two zones. The asymmetry also had a mental dimension. A prevalent ideology shared by most lowlanders tended to reflect, from their perspective, the political and military frontier between mountain and plain as a dividing line between the 'barbarian' and the 'civilized'[2]). But there was an element of illusion in this idea, since montane societies, even if they rejected political and military forces directed against them, seem to have been open to, and permeable by, various cultural and economic forces stemming from the lowlands. In the context of Rome's rule of the Mediterranean, the particular concern of this paper, this dichotomous flow of power opens up the more vexatious and interesting problem of the way in which we ought to draw a map of the empire.

The case study selected here for analysis of the range of interactions between mountain and plain is that of southeastern Anatolia, principally the Adana Plain drained by the Seyhan Göksu and the Seyhan, and the surrounding mountain ranges of the Taurus to the west and north, and the Hatay to the east[3]). In classical antiquity this

1) A theme established by F Braudel, *La Méditerranée et le monde Méditerranéen à l'époque de Philippe II*, 1e ed., Paris, 1949; 2 rev ed. 1966; Engl. transl. by Siân Reynolds, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*, 2 vols., London, 1972 (paperback ed., 1975), pt. I, 'The Role of the Environment', 1, 'The Peninsulas: Mountains, Plateaux, and Plains', 25-102.

2) P Briant, "'Brigandage', dissidence et conquête en Asie Achéménide et Hellénistique", *DHA*, 2 (1976) 163-258.

3) For the 'geographical facts', suitable points of departure are provided by P Birot & J Dresch, *La Méditerranée et le Moyen-Orient*, t. 2: *La Méditerranée orientale et le Moyen-Orient*, Paris, 1956, esp. 144-92; [British Admiralty] Naval Intelligence Division, *Turkey*, vol. 1, London, Geographical Handbook Series B.R. 507 (1942) 91-101 and 142-59; X. de Planhol, *De la plaine Pamphylienne aux Lacs Pisidiens: nomadisme et vie paysanne*, Paris (1958) esp. 68-85 and 112-22; and his *Les fondements géographique de l'histoire de l'Islam*, Paris, 1986.

whole region was generally known by the amorphous term 'Cilicia', and contained an equally indeterminate mountain highlands labelled 'Isauria'. To begin with the central mountain core of the region, we might say that to observers of the time Isauria was a mountain zone of uncertain and varying frontiers which was located in the south-eastern quadrant of Anatolia and which dominated the mainland opposite Cyprus[4]). In the high Roman empire of the mid-second century AD, its mountainous core was dissected and encompassed by the boundaries of several imperial provinces in Asia Minor, including Pamphylia, Galatia, and Cappadocia. The main focus of the analysis here, however, will be the part of this mountainous zone in southern Anatolia that was sometimes covered by the term Cilicia (Greek, *Kilikia*), but often by the more specific designation 'Rough' Cilicia (Greek, *Kilikia Tracheia*; Latin, *Cilicia Aspera*). This 'Rough Cilicia' was integrally associated with the lowland plains region to the east centered on the rivers Kydnos and Saros, and the urban centre-places of Tarsos and Adana, that was called level or 'plains' Cilicia (Greek, *Kilikia Pedias*; Latin, *Cilicia Campestris*). Although the principal focus of our inquity will be the Isaurian district of 'Rough Cilicia', evidence will be drawn more broadly from the mountain areas surrounding the Adana Plain generally (e.g. the Amanus to the east) since these other highlands presented much the same problem as that posed by Isauria. Although this paper will try to provide a better understanding of Isauria by considering its history in the long-term, the presentation will concentrate on important conjunctures and will therefore approach the problem as a series of episodes.

From the period of our earliest surviving historical records the mountain region of southern Anatolia called Isauria was inhabited by peoples identified by distinctive cultural and linguistic traits. They spoke a language which is today labelled Luwian—a language which seems to have remained, throughout the millennia, the principal

4) For a discussion of the 'natural frontiers' of the region see T B. Mitford, "Roman Rough Cilicia", *ANRW*, II.7.2 (1980) 1230-1261, 'II. The Boundaries', pp. 1232-34.

means of spoken communication in the region[5]). It is this cultural unity that the Greek historian Herodotos emphasized as the defining characteristic of the region: 'Egypt, I consider, is the whole extent of territory inhabited by the Egyptians, just as Kilikia is the country occupied by the Kilikians, or Assyria the country occupied by the Assyrians'[6]). It is surely this ethnic unity that must be taken as the definition of what 'Kilikia' was throughout the whole of antiquity. It therefore included the whole of the Taurus highlands as far west as the Melas river and Lakes Trogitis (Sogla Göl) and Karalis, the homeland of the Homanadeis in the northwest[7]). These Luwian speakers did not identify themselves wholly as either Isaurians or Cilicians. We are here dealing with the common phenomenon of ethnic labelling: of outsiders rather indiscriminately pasting uniform names on diverse cultural groups. In this precise sense, as 'total labels' for the inhabitants of the region the terms 'Isaurians' and 'Cilicians' were ones used by outsiders, probably derived from the first ethnic groups in the region encountered by them. The label 'Isauria' and 'Isaurians' came from the *gens Isaura* or 'Isaurian people' who were located around their home village-centres of Isaura Vetus and Nova on the far eastern flanks of the Taurus. For outsiders approaching the highlands from this direction, all inhabitants of mountains further to the east became 'Isaurian'. Under this broad umbrella-like ethnic label, however, there were local differences. By collating the information offered by imperial Roman geographers we can detect some of these. Furthest west were the Homanadeis. Immediately east of them were the Isaurians proper, around Isaura Vetus, and east of them the Lalasseis, probably located in the whole of the central mountain region between the Anemurium-Germanicopolis longitude and the Kalykadnos River. Finally, the peoples on the far eastern flank of the

---

5) P H. J Houwink Ten Cate, *The Luwian Population Groups of Lycia and Cilicia Aspera during the Hellenistic Period*, Leiden (1965).

6) Hdt. 2.17

7) T R. S. Broughton, "Some Notes on the War with the Homonadeis", *AJPh*, 54 (1933) 134-44, at 134-37 and 141-43

Taurus range as it abutted on the Adana Plain were known as the Kennatai. It was probably from initial encounters with them by Near Eastern peoples that the label *Kietai/Kilikiai* was applied to all mountain dwellers to the west. Both terms, therefore, came to be used in a general way to designate the mountain block and its inhabitants[8]). Certainly the native term for the eastern part of the region, from the period of our earliest written records until the end of the Roman empire, was *Ketis*, the inhabitants calling themselves *Kietai* or *Ketai*[9]). In external documents from at least the thirteenth century BC onwards, the Adana plain and the adjacent narrow coastal strip south of Isauria were known collectively as *Qodi, Que, Hue* or *Hume*[10]). The mountain highland of Isauria itself, however, was already seen as a distinct geographical unit dubbed *Hiluku* or *Hilakku*, which appears in the record for the first time in the ninth century BC. The term is probably related to the later Greek *Kilikia* as the designation of the region[11]).

I. Early States and Kilikia

When Cilicia-Isauria first comes to historical notice in the early to mid second millennium BC, it is only tangential to attempts by the major states of the time, those of Assyria to the southeast and of the

8) Strabo 14.5 1 (C668); Pliny, *NK*, 5.23.94, Ptolemy 5.8.6; cf. Magie, *op.cit.* n. 61 below, 1354 f., for an interpretation see R. Syme, "Isauria in Pliny", *AS*, 36 (1986) 159-64.

9) Mitford (1980) 1245; cf. Josephus, *Ant. J* 18.5 4., and the life and miracles of St. Thekla, *Vita*, 27.31, and *Mir* 19 = Migne, *PG*, 85, 556 & 569 = Dagron, *Vie et miracles de sainte Thècle* (cited in n. 126 below) 276-77 and 340-41, cf. A. H. M. Jones, "Cilicia", ch. 8 (in) *The Cities of the Eastern Roman Provinces*, M. Avi-Yonah et al. eds. (= *CERP*[2]), Oxford (1971) 191-214, at 195 and n5

10) A. Erzen, *Kilikien bis zum Ende der Perserherrschaft*, Dissertation, Borna-Leipzig (1940) 54-58, and J D Bing, *A History of Cilicia During the Assyrian Period*, PhD Dissertation, Indiana University (1969) 28n80

11) Erzen (1940) 55-58; Bing (1969) 35 *Hiluku-Hilakku* are surely related to later-attested ethnic of *Kennatai*, and *Kilikia* probably became the Greek designation because of their early colonization of Tarsos and the Adana Plain.

Hittites in the high Anatolian plateau to the north, to control the Adana Plain. It was probably as part of Hittite expansion south into the plains zone that the so-called 'Cilician Gates' pass through the Taurus was first engineered about 1550 BC The Hittite state confirmed its control of the plains, and some of the coastal zone south of the mountains of Isauria, by establishing a fortified complex at Mersin, just east of the later site of Soloi/Pompeiopolis[12]). The whole sphere of Hittite interest in southeastern Anatolia included the mountain highland known as *Kizzuwatna.* Their hegemony over this part of Anatolia was not exercized as much over Kizzuwatna proper (which was the region to the north later known as Kataonia) as over the alluvial plains of lowland Cilicia. Even here the Hittite presence seems to have been a sporadic one. As for the surrounding mountains, their control was dependent on the exercize of indirect authority through local men of power, as is reflected in the agreement struck between Suppiluliumas and Sunassura, the lord of Kizzuwatna; it was a negotiated relationship that tried to define respective spheres of authority[13]). The relationship, often spoken of in jargon appropriate to a modern absolutist state as 'a treaty', was in fact based on a highly personal relationship between two men, ideally marked by a parity in exchange of goods and services, whatever the actual elements of subordination involved[14]).

---

12) For a detailed description and history of the pass see W M. Ramsey, "Cilicia, Tarsus, and the Great Tarsus Pass", *Geographical Journal*, 22 (1903) 357-413, on the construction of the pass see Bing (1969) 4.

13) On the location of Kizzuwatna see A. Goetze, *Kizzuwatna and the Problem of Hittite Geography*, New Haven, 1940; for the degree of control see Bing (1969) 21, on the treaty see J G M. MacQueen, *The Hittites and their Contemporaries in Asia* Minor, London (1975) 43, for an description of the situation O.R. Gurney, *The Hittites*, Harmondsworth (1952, rev ed. 1964), 25 on the first treaty struck by Telipinus: 'The treaty itself has not survived, and we do not know its terms. But as the ruler of Kizzuwatna apparently claimed the title of 'Great King', and as Kizzuwatna is known as a powerful state in the following century, we may suppose that Telipinus recognized its king on terms of approximate parity'

14) Gurney (1964) 30-31, 74. 'The weaning of [Kizzuwatna] from its allegiance to Mitanni is represented as an act of liberation, and almost every obligation undertaken by the king of Kizzuwatna is carefully matched by a reciprocal and identical

Little is known about the situation in the southeastern Anatolian highlands after the period of Hittite ascendancy in the region, which lasted approximately from the 1650s to the late 1200s BC. When the region re-emerges in the historical record in the mid-ninth century it is, once again, as an object of central state control, this time of the expanding Assyrian empire. During the best-documented period of Assyrian involvement in the region, between the reigns of Shalmaneser III and Assurbanipal (859-627 BC), it is the alluvial lowland that is the primary object of Assyrian control. This plains region is controlled, initially, by the dual devices of military raids and the (sometimes compelled) co-operation of local big men. The first major Assyrian raid documented in our sources was made in the reign of Shalmaneser III in the early 830s BC on the towns of Que, then under the control of a certain Katê who controlled other men in the lowlands by their subordination to him. The Assyrian raids were not primarily aimed at conquest (in terms of permanent territorial annexation), but at the delivery of tribute and a show of subordination by the local man in control—which Katê duly displayed by kissing the feet of Shalmaneser and by giving his daughter to the Assyrian monarch, along with a substantial dowry[15]). There is no sign of any intention by the Assyrian state to institute forms of permanent administration of the Cilician plain during this period. When Katê 'rebelled' and had to be disciplined by use of force and removed, the Assyrians merely turned to his brother, Kirri, and

---

obligation on the part of the Hittite king. But he is none the less under Hittite protection, has to appear annually at Hattusas to do hommage, and undertakes to eschew all diplomatic intercourse with the king of Hurri.' It is important, however, to understand this less in the terms of modern diplomacy than of personal endebtedness based on a template of kinship obligations. See Gurney (1964) 75-76 on the elements of these 'treaties' including the personal oath, the tribute, and the 'hommage', and 76-77 on their form as an imitation of kin brotherhood.

15) See the so-called 'Monolith Inscription' from Kurkh (now in the BM), D D Luckenbill, *Ancient Records of Assyria and Babylonia*, 2 vols., Chicago, 1926-1927, reprint: New York, 1968 (henceforth, *ARAB*), I, n610, p. 212 (500 soldiers from Que under Shalmaneser III, 6th year of his reign) = *ANET*^{3}, 279 See also Bing (1969) 39, 42, 45, and 48.

made him 'king' in Tarsos. For more than a century, the Assyrian dependence on the indirect control of personal agents remained the state of affairs. Urikki, the lord of Que, is found as a bigman who is tributary to Tiglath-Pileser in the 740s and 730s BC[16]).

The first signs of a more permanent control over the plains of Cilicia come in the years after 715/713 BC when Sargon moved directly into Que and Hilakku, appointing a Assyrian governor over both[17]). Whatever powers these governors actually exercized, their rule quickly came to an end when, on the death of Sargon in 705, the lowland Cilicians began to reject Assyrian domination. The tributary secession was led by one Azitawadda and later by his successor Kirua, two local men whose rebellion, founded on regional power, lasted until about 695[18]). It is only in the aftermath of this local secessionist movement that the monarch Esarhaddon moved to establish a more permanent Assyrian presence first over the Cilician plains and then over the mountains of Hilakku to the west. The achievement of this new hegemony over the Cilician lowland was marked by the establishment of a great 'port of tribute' under Assyrian control at Cyinda, which served over the next four centuries, under the succeeding Persian and Macedonian states, as the point of tribute collection and export for the whole of Cilicia Pedias[19]).

---

16) *ARAB*, I, n801, p. 287, cf. n803, p. 283 (in year 3+) = *ANET*^{3}, p. 282; cf. Bing (1969) 60.

17) *ARAB*, II, n25, p. 11 (thereby imposing 'Assyrian vassalage' on them), cf. C. J Gadd, "Inscribed Prisms of Sargon II from Nimrud", *Iraq*, 16 (1954) 173-201, at 183-84, and Bing (1969) 74-75, and 81n50

18) Bing (1969) 89 and 90n3, they used Luwian dialects in their inscriptions, pointed out freedom of movement along roads, actions taken against 'bandit gangs', and aid given to the local poor as benefits of their rule.

19) See Strabo 14.5 10 (C672): the port was used as a γαζοφυλάκιον by the Macedonians; Diod.Sic. 18.62.2: Κυίνδοι is a φρούριον and a treasury controlled by Ptolemy in 318; 19.56.5· where it is controlled by Seleukos, who has 10,000 talents stored there, in addition to it being the focal point for the storage of 11,000 talents collected in the region annually; and 20.108.2: Antigonus gains control of it. The centre-place only lost this role when Eumenes revolted from Seleukid tributary status thereby orienting Kilikia's tribute to a central Anatolian point. Cf. Bing (1969) 123 f., its location is still unknown, but it lay somewhere close to the confluence of the Kydnos-Saros rivers and towards Zephyrium; note the strategic importance of the location, near the site of the Hittite fort of Mersin.

Thirty years of successive Assyrian military ventures in Hilakku, between 696 and 663, produced the submission of twenty-one 'cities' in the mountains and, finally, the surrender of the local big man Sandasarme. But the effect was emphemeral, lasting at most for a generation, since by the 630s the inhabitants of mountainous Hilakku/Hume were reversing the process and beginning to attack the surrounding plains. Nebuchadnezzar's raids into Hume in the late 590s were an attempt to stem rebellious elements in the plains, led by a certain 'Syennesis' who, by the mid 580s, styled himself 'king of the Kilikians' and was able to play the role of intermediary between the Lydians and the Medes[20]). The final Assyro-Babylonian raid on Hume, staged in 555 by Nabonidus, was no more successful in establishing a permanent order than were the earlier ones; in 547 Cilicia is still found under the rule of a Syennesis[21]). His hegemony, we must suspect, was limited to the plains and even there was dependent on other lesser dynasts' personal loyalty to him. By the early fifth century, the new Persian state acted as if it had a nominal claim to authority over most of Anatolia; in the aftermath of Salamis, Xerxes felt able to bestow rulership over the whole of Cilicia as a gift to one Xeinagoras, in reward for his services[22]). But there is no reason to believe that Achaemenid control over Cilicia, either of the plains or the mountains, was of a direct type that would merit the name of province of an empire. Rather, it seems that one or other member of the same local family, who bore the name, Syennesis, continued to rule till the end of the fifth century. The Syennesis family's

20) Hdt. 1.74.3, Συέννεσίς τε ὁ Κίλιξ supervised the oath (ὅρκιον) between the two parties, and the exchange of women (γάμων ἐπαλλαγή) involved. It is difficult to discern whether the word Συέννεσις as used by Herodotos, Xenophon, and Diodorus Siculus was meant to designate a personal name or a title for the most powerful man in Cilicia; a probable solution is that the same name was borne by a series of successive rulers from the same 'family' in the region and that it therefore came to have titular significance; compare the Roman 'Caesar'

21) See the so-called 'Nabonidus Chronicle' (i), *ANET*[3], p. 305, and the 'Nabonidus stele' (xi), *ibid.*, p. 311.

22) In the early 470s, see Hdt. 9 107.3 Ξειναγόρης Κιλικίης πάσης ἦρξε δόντος βασιλέος; cf. J Hofstetter, *Die Griechen in Persien*, Berlin (1978) no. 333

command over the plains region would have been firmer than any it might have been able to claim over the mountains. Xenophon is able to have Cyrus proffer to his men as the reason for their expedition not any attack on Artaxerxes the king, but a punitive raid against certain rebellious dynasts of Cilicia[23]). A not improbable claim and one that presumed the control of the mountains by autonomous tyrants.

What is more, the relations between the Syennesis who was ruling the Cilician Plain at the end of the fifth century and the incoming Graeco-Persian armed force under Xenophon and Cyrus are typical of a situation where power has to be exercized through channels of personal obligation and endebtedness of dependants. If this was the nature of Syennesis' control over the plains of Cilicia, then one must suspect *a fortiori* that whatever little he was able to exert over Isauria would have been well within the confines of this same basic type of power[24]). Syennesis' personal connections with the lords of Isauria may well have been sufficiently strong to allow him to call upon local dynasts in the region to try to block the passage of Cyrus' army—though this is hardly a necessary interpretation of their actions in raiding the Persian convoys; they could simply have been indulging in normal violence independent of any connection with Syennesis[25]). The nature of this type of personal power and its basic modes of operation are made clear by the subsequent contacts between the two sides. As the foreign army approached, Syennesis used his wife as an intermediary to go to Cyrus and to offer gifts to him as a means of forging the first bonds of a close personal relationship[26]). Cyrus'

23) Diod. Sic. 14.19.3 ἔφασκε δ'εἰς Κιλικίαν ἀνάγειν τὴν δύναμιν ἐπὶ τοὺς ἀφεστηκότας τοῦ βασιλέως τυράννους.

24 See Xen. *Anab.* 1.2.12, where this Syennesis is called ὁ Κιλίκων βασιλεύς. Tarsus and the plains area seem to be the geographical centre of his power, see *Anab.* 1.2.22-24. At *Hell.* 3 1.1. Xenophon notes that the ships under the Spartan Samios aided the land attack by bringing warships to the coast of Cilicia Pedias. Here Syennesis is referred to as the 'ruler' of the region (ὁ τῆς Κιλικίας ἄρχων Συέννεσις).

25) See Xen. *Anab.* 1.2.12 f., a significant part of Menon's force sent through the region was lost because of attacks on it by the Isaurians.

26) Xen. *Anab.* 1.2.11, the role of the go-between was later portrayed as compromised by Epyaxa, who is said to have gone so far as to have had sexual intercourse with Cyrus.

army was able to march unopposed through the Cilician Gates and down the river valleys into the Cilician plains themselves. A raid was made on Tarsus, followed by an orchestrated meeting and exchange between the two men to establish a more formal relationship between them. The exchange was part of the pact of ritualized friendship struck by the two men[27]). Cyrus sent a message to Syennesis in his mountain retreat[28]). In return, Syennesis formally declared that he 'had never come into the power of anyone stronger than himself'. Finally, his wife, reversing her earlier role as a go-between, brought *pisteis* ('objects of trust') from Cyrus to her husband as the first step in establishing a dominant relationship in the opposite direction[29]). The new relationship between the two men was then sealed by Syennesis' donation of large sums of money and other supplies to Cyrus which he needed for his army; Cyrus, in turn, transferred in the opposite direction a whole series of gifts (δῶρα) which he thought fitting on a scale of honour for a king (Κῦρος δὲ ἐκείνῳ δῶρα ἃ νομίζεται παρὰ βασιλεῖ τίμια)[30]). This exchange was further marked, on Cyrus' part, by a promise not to raid Syennesis' territory and to return any of Syennesis' subjects who might have been (or who would be) enslaved by his forces[31]). The whole period of Cyrus' stay in Cilicia with his army, however, was under a month. The brief episode illustrates the rather tenuous hold that the centre of the Achaemenid state had over the region. The normal type of control that was achieved by the Persian monarch's men over the plains of Cilicia was

---

27) For the development of this concept, and its application to historical contexts, see G. Herman, *Ritualized Friendship and the Greek City*, Cambridge (1987) ch. 2.

28) Xen. *Anab.* 1.2.24, Syennesis apparently had a mountain base to which he was able to retreat, along with the citizens of Tarsus (excepting the despised 'trader' elements).

29) Xen. *Anab.* 1.2.26, Κῦρος δ'ἐπεὶ εἰσήλασεν εἰς τὴν πόλιν, μετεπέμετο τὸν Συέννεσιν πρὸς ἑαυτόν. ὁ δ' οὔτε πρότερον οὐδενί πω κρείττονι ἑαυτοῦ χεῖρας ἐλθεῖν ἔφη, οὔτε τότε Κύρῳ ἰέναι ἤθελε, πρὶν ἡ γυνὴ αὐτὸν ἔπεισε καὶ πίστεις ἔλαβε.

30) Xen. *Anab.* 1.2.26-27 the gifts included a fine horse with gold bridle and a golden collar golden bracelets, a golden scimitar, a fine Persian robe.

31) Xen. *Anab.* 1.2.26.

that of ritualized friendship. Cyrus' version of this bond, in the event, turned out to be of rather brief duration. One can only assume that after the departure of Cyrus, Syennesis and his descendants continued to exercize whatever power they had formerly held in the region.

Down to the mid-fourth century BC, therefore, there is no indication that the region of Isauria, which was nominally within the sphere of control assigned by modern historians to the Hittites, Assyrians, Babylonians, or Persians, was ever effectively in the power of any of them for any length of time. Whatever power they did achieve over the mountains (and lowlands) was firmly embedded within the limitations set by personal relations. This mode of power permitted a loose and indirect control of the Adana plains, while the mountains remained beyond any permanent domination. In the centuries immediately following, when the region was nominally encompassed by the Macedonian and Seleucid spheres of domination, this situation does not seem to have changed in any significant way.

II. Cilicia-Isauria and the Story of Datames

The situation in Isauria and its relationship to the Achaemenid state in the period down to the mid-fourth century BC is perhaps best illustrated by the story of one of its major official representatives who operated throughout the region in the period between the late 380s and the late 360s BC: the dynast Datames[32]). In his biography of

32) The story of Datames is that recorded in Cornelius Nepos' biography of him (*Vitae, XIV*); for an analysis, see M. N Weiskopf, "The Rise of Datames of Cilicia: the Role of the Local Man in the Far West", ch. 4 (in) *Achaemenid Systems of Governing in Anatolia*, PhD Dissertation, University of California, Berkeley (1982) 197-220 As will be seen below, my interpretation of the life is less straightforwardly 'historical' than is that of Weiskopf, or indeed of any of the standard modern historians of ancient Persia. These historians, such as A. T Olmstead, *History of the Persian Empire*, Chicago (1948; repr 1970) 401, 409, 412-13, and 422, and J M. Cook, *The Persian Empire*, New York (1983) 217, tend to take the 'facts' of the Datames story at face value, as events that can be retold as such. I am not as

Datames, Cornelius Nepos reports that this man came, by various acts of merit and personal influence, to have the western mountain-zone of Cilicia (Isauria) as his sphere of command (he is called a 'satrap' in some other sources)[33]). Nepos' version must be derived from a Greek original, which was in turn dependent on a (partly oral?) story version of Datames' career emanating from Anatolia[34]). The instruments which Datames is reported to have used to control the region are basically the same dual ones used earlier by the Assyrian and Babylonian states. He relied on the occasional use of violent raiding and on the resource of formalized personal relationships in order to enforce a hierarchy of obedience based primarily on personal endebtedness. In this way local men of power in each district of the mountains ceded part of their power to a man like Datames, who was thereby able to control the region, and who was in turn answerable for it to the Persian central state.

In a paradigmatic case of this chain-like sequence of personal control, the Persian king decided to exert a firmer control over one of these long-entrenched Anatolian dynasts, named Thuys, having been provoked by the man's independence, his daring and arrogance in rejecting the king's word[35]). The campaign of punishment directed against Thuys was assigned to Datames precisely because of the latter's kinship relationship to the man (they were cousins)[36]). It is this very resource, namely kinship, which Datames sought to deploy first

---

sanguine. I tend to see its significance as a literary piece that attempts to emphasize certain motifs in the 'external' relationships between local men under Achaemenid rule and the crown, and the 'internal' relationships these same men had with the 'barbarian' peoples whom they must control.

33) Nep. *Dat.* 1 1 habuit provinciam partem Ciliciam iuxta Cappadociam...

34) Datames was not the mans 'real' name, but reflects the intermediate stage of a Greek 'translation' of the story; his name must have been closer to the 'Tadanmu' known from some Aramaic sources.

35) Nep. *Dat.* 2.2: Erat eo tempore Thuys dynastes Paphlagoniae, antiquo genere.. Is regi dicto audiens non erat. Quam ob causam bello eum persequi constituit. Olmstead (1948) 401 and Cook (1983) 217 take the whole story as told as straightforward fact.

36) Nep. *Dat.* 2.3 ... eique rei praefecit Datamen propinquum Paphlagonis; namque ex fratre et sorore erant nati.

in order to bring Thuys to his obligations. That is to say, Datames attempted to exploit a relationship of personal subordination to enforce a moral hierarchy, without having recourse to arms[37]). To demonstrate the expected roles to be played by either side in a situation like this, the story sets the confrontation between Datames and Thuys in a dramatic context. Datames is said to advance unarmed to Thuys' holdout, with his own mother in tow (i.e. Thuys' maternal aunt) as a symbol of his intention to rely on kinship rather than on arms[38]). In this case, however, the ploy did not work (it was upset by a personal betrayal) and Datames was forced to go against his *amicus* with arms, finally to capture Thuys, his wife and children.

At this point the scenario assumes a structural contrast between mountain and plain. Thuys himself is portrayed as the quintessential barbarian mountain man: a huge body, a terrible appearance, a black face, long hair and a bristling beard[39]). Datames leads the savage captive down out of the mountains in order to display his catch to the Persian king. In the process of crossing that frontier, Datames washes and scrubs Thuys and dresses him in clean, civilized attire; but at this very juncture Datames himself assumes the aspect of the wild man, an *agrestus* dressed in a peasant's thick mountain coat and hairy tunic—an untamed hunter leading the wild beast on a leash to his master[40]). The Persian king's agent brings an equally 'noble ruler' into the former's power, contrary to all expectation[41]). In return the Persian king rewards Datames with a large gift.

37) Nep. *Dat.* 2.3 Quam ob causam Datames primum experiri voluit ut sine armis propinquum ad officium reduceret. Note that the language is the opposite of that which would later obtain under the Roman empire, where, eventually, it was a whole territorial unit or people who were *in formam provinciam redactum*; here, on the other hand, the 'reduction' is to a form of personal duty and obligation.

38) Nep. *Dat.* 2.3-4. Ad quem cum venisset sine praesidio, quod ob amico nullas vereretur insidias, paene interiit... Erat mater cum Datame, amita Paphlagonis.

39) Nep. *Dat.* 3 1 ...hominem maximi corporis terribilique facie, quod et niger et capillo longo barbaque erat promissa.

40) Nep. *Dat.* 3.2: Ipse agresti duplici amiculo circumdatus hirtaque tunica, gerens in capite galeam venatoriam, dextra manu clavam, sinistra copulam, qua vinctum, ante se Thuynem agebat, ut si feram bestiam captam duceret.

41) Nep. *Dat.* 3 4. ...quod nobilis rex in potestatem inopinanti venerat.

It is by much these same means that the Persian king was reputed to have tried to control other mountain men in the region, men such as Aspis, dynast over the peoples of Kataonia, to the northeast of the Cilician plain. Kataonia was, in fact, the same mountainous region that was known as Kizzuwatna in the Hittite/Babylonian-Assyrian period. In this highland zone, with its dense forests, the lords in their fortified *castella* were not obedient to the king, and acted with brazen autonomy, to the point of raiding what was owed to the monarch as tribute[42]). Once again, when Datames is given the assignment he uses little force and a lot of cunning, finally to capture Aspis 'the hunter' who surrenders at the mere sight of his opponent[43]).

It is important to note that Datames maintained his base in Isauria (or Cilicia Tracheia) by relations with subordinate 'friends' he had there. Datames himself was a middleman in this chain of power; he was held responsible for the Isaurians below him, and was linked vertically to the central Persian court, in this case partly by the device of marriage (to the daughter of a regional Persian satrap Mithrobarzanes)[44]). But his very success in playing this role, and his success in controlling the mountain men of Isauria, ironically reverses on Datames. The reason, surely, was the domination of topography over the lines of personal power; put differently, the mountains made the man. His base in the mountains of Isauria made him, whether he intended it or not, independent of the central state to a degree that turned him, willy-nilly, into a 'rebel'. The autonomy that naturally accrued to Datames 'backfired', creating an atmosphere of suspicion in which he could successfully be accused of 'traitorous actions' and made the object of attacks by more powerful men located in the central court. In response to these accusations, a king's man, one

42) Nep. *Dat.* 4.1-3 ...Aspim aggrederetur, qui Cataoniam tenebat, quae gens iacet supra Ciliciam, confinis Cappadociae. Namque Aspis, saltuosam regionem castellisque munitam incolens, non solum imperio regis non parebat, sed etiam finitimas regiones vexabat et quae regi portarentur abripiebat.

43) Once again, Olmstead (1948) 409 and Cook (1983) 217 take the story as empirical fact.

44) Nep. *Dat.* 6.3 On Mithrobarzanes position see Olmstead (1948) 412.

Autophrodates, was sent out with a large military force to punish Datames. The relationships which then are struck between Autophrodates and Datames are an eerie replay of the same types of relationships which Datames himself had earlier tried to forge with men in the mountains of Cilicia. As such they offer a clear insight into how power was conceived as operating between the central state and those in the highlands. Autophrodates at first abjures the use of force; he foresees that, even with a large military force at his command, such a war would be long, costly, and futile—it would actually be counterproductive of the king's resources. Autophrodates therefore advised that a negotiated settlement should be sought[45]). What he hoped to establish with Datames in his mountains were *pax* and *amicitia* that would in time reduce Datames to the *gratia* of the king. Datames, in spite of his mistrust of the *fides* of Autophrodates, accepted this negotiated settlement or *condicio*[46]). Representatives or *legati* then provided the link between the two sides.

The Persian king, portrayed as having been outwitted by Datames in this first encounter, is compelled to remove Datames by the latter's own device, by cunning. He uses an intermediary, one Mithridates son of Ariobarzanes, who first extracts an agreement from the king to be given *carte blanche* to deal with Datames. This pact was also a form of ritualized friendship (*amicitia*), involving relations of 'trust' (*fides*) based on promises and sealed with a formal exchange of the 'right hand'[47]). The exchange of the hand was not necessarily a literal one; the king could give his hand to his messenger who would then give it to Mithridates. Or, alternatively, one party could give a model

45) Nep. *Dat.* 8.5· Autophrodates, cum bellum duci maiore regis calamitate quam adversariorum videret, pacem amicitiamque hortatus est, ut cum rege in gratiam rediret.

46) Nep. *Dat.* 8.6: Quam ille etsi fidem non fore putabat, tamen condicionem accepit seque ad Artaxerxem legatos missurum dixit.

47) Nep. *Dat.* 10.1. Hic tamen callidus vir extremo tempore captus est Mithridatis, Ariobarzanis filii, dolo. Namque is pollicitus est regi se eum interfectum, si ei rex permitteret ut quodcumque vellet liceret impune facere, fidemque de ea re more Persarum dextra dedisset.

hand to a messenger who could then transfer the surrogate object to the waiting hand of the second party to an agreement[48]). The 'right hand' and its exchange had a paramount importance as part of rituals establishing this type of relationship; the presence of this form of exchange is a guarantee of the existence of the whole of this type of relationship as the one that governed the actions of either party[49]). In this case, the point of the formalized exchange was that it enabled the king to transfer his power to an intermediary, who then acquired all the responsibility to face an ambiguous situation where the king might fail. By this act, the surrogate, Mithridates, became an autonomous agent in the 'vacuum' between the king and the mountain man. His first move is to form a similar bond of friendship with Datames, though from a distance, without actually seeing him (and therefore also via a go-between). In a cunning reverse, by exploiting his apparently independent status, Mithridates feigned an attitude towards the Persian monarch which he assumed Datames would also share: he raided and plundered the king's domain[50]). By acting in this way, by involving himself in the ritualistic exchange of plunder and property, and by conducting a 'boundless war' (*infinitum bellum*) against the king, Mithridates behaviour places him in the same category in which Datames has already been located. At first, the story account emphasizes, Mithridates sought no negotiation with

---

48) See Justin, 11 15.3 (*dextram fert*) and Xen. *Cyrop.* 4.2.7 (*phereι dexιan*). For the use of model hands in frontier contexts in the Roman state see Tac. *Hist.* 1.54, 2.8.

49) For a partial study that is, however, limited to the ideological aspects of the problem see P Boyancé, "La main de *fides*", (in) *Hommages à Jean Bayet*, Collection Latomus, no. 70, Brussels (1964) 101-13 = *Etudes sur la religion romaine*, Rome, Collection de l'Ecole française de Rome, no. 11 (1971) 121-33 As Boyancé points out, the ritual is integrally connected with the bond of trust or good faith; see also his "*Fides* et le serment" (in) *Hommages à Albert Grenier*, Brussels (1962), I, 329-41 = *Etudes sur la religion romaine*, 91-103 That an actual model of the right hand, in bronze or some other material, continued to be used in this ritual cannot be doubted; see the case study by A. Piganiol, "*Fides* et mains de bronze: *densae dexterae*, Cic., *ad Att.*, VII, 1", (in) *Droits de l'Antiquité et sociologie juridique: Mélanges Henri Lévi-Bruhl*, Paris (1959) 471-73

50) Nep. *Dat.* 10.2.

Datames, no parlay; he did not wish to confront him in order to speak[51]). Instead, he remained distant and sought to operate his relationships with Datames on the basis of an understood *amicitia*; he did not seek to rely on mutual favours or *beneficia*, but rather on actions motivated by a common antipathy[52]).

It is only at the point where Mithridates wished *to confirm* this relationship that he moved to seek a conference with Datames, which meeting is referred to formally as a *colloquium*[53]). The *colloquium* therefore becomes the critical juncture for the meeting between mountain and plain, and the confirmation of the negotiated settlement that is to be arrived at between the two parties[54]). The *colloquium* is described in fairly detailed terms. It is a meeting that takes place on interstitial neutral ground between the two groups, with both coming unarmed and dependent on the good faith (*fides*) of the other. This type of ritualistic contact is repeatedly referred to as a *colloquium*, with a *tempus* and a *locus colloquendi*, in a manner which would suggest that it too was part of the ritualistic means of contact between persons who found themselves in two autonomous spheres, such as mountain and plain, that required some point and place of negotiation. In a motif typical of an uncertain situation such as this, the problem, which might well have been solved by means of an agreement or part (*pax*), was finally resolved by the capture of Datames by the ploy of inverting the existing relationships, by a feigned friendship. The arch-

---

51) Nep. *Dat.* 10.3 .neque colloquium eius petivit neque in conspectum eius venire studuit.

52) Nep. *Dat.* 10.3 Sic absens amicitiam gerebat, ut non beneficiis mutuis, sed communi odio quod erga regem susceperant contineri viderentur

53) Nep. *Dat.* 11.1. Id cum satis se confirmasse arbitratus est, certiorem facit Datamen tempus esse ... deque ea re, si ei videretur quo loco vellet *in colloquium veniret.* Probata re, *colloquendi tempus* sumitur *locusque quo conveniretur*

54) For this institution in other montane contexts see B. D Shaw, "Autonomy and Tribute: Mountain and Plain in Mauretania Tingitana", (in) P R. Baduel ed., *Désert et Montagne: Hommage à Jean Dresch = Revue de l'Occident Musulman et de la Méditerranée* 41-45 (1987) 66-89, at 72-74.

plotter was himself captured by a plot[55]). But the problem, to be sure, was still resolved at a personal level.

We do not know the fate of Mithridates, or the extent to which he was or was not able to duplicate Datames' control of Isauria. We cannot know the 'real' outcome of this vignette. But if Mithridates did indeed succeed in displacing Datames, we can only suspect that the same end also threatened him. The whole point of the Datames story, however, does not lie in its absolute historical veracity of detail, but rather in its symbolic representation of the long term relations between mountain and plain in southeast Anatolia. The story presents to us a pure model of the only way in which participants in those relationships could envisage them: as a series of formal personal contacts pyramided into a loosely negotiated 'domination'—and nothing more. The type of control exercized by the Persian state over the region to the end of the fourth century was no different in kind. Nor did Alexander or the successor Seleucid kingdoms have any more success in altering this type of authority in Isauria. Alexander himself made no more than a few punitive raids before passing onwards to the southeast. Cities like Selge on the mountain periphery to the west, were able to act as autonomous states, forging links of *pistia* with Alexander, marked by a formal exchange of elements of trust (*pista*)[56]). The men he left behind as his surrogates did not fare well in their attempts to enforce a more permanent control over the mountain regions of Asia Minor. Balakras, who remained as 'satrap' of Cilicia failed miserably in his attacks on Laranda and Isaura, losing his life in the attempt[57]).

Only in the aftermath of Alexander's death were more serious efforts made to bring the force of the central state into the mountains.

---

55) Nep. *Dat.* 11.5: At ille vir, qui multos consilio, neminem perfidia ceperat, simulata captus est amicitia.

56) Arrian, *Anab.* 1.28.1, cf. Strabo 12.7.3 (C571) who emphasizes that, although their autonomy had been guaranteed by their topography until his own time, they were now for the first time *subjects* of the Roman state.

57) Diod. Sic. 18.22.1, cf. E. R. Bevan, *The House of Seleucus*, 2 vols., London, 1902; reprint: London, 1966, I.92.

Successful raids were staged on Laranda and Isaura leading to the extermination of their inhabitants (in the latter case, by mass suicide)[58]). But nothing further was achieved. The fierce resistance of the Isaurians aided by the terrain, and the need for the Hellenistic successor states to deploy their armed resources against each other, brought an effective end to these attempts. Indeed, in the context of such monumental antipathies, the existence of armed refuges and neutral zones, even if they were also zones of permanent dissidence, was actually perceived by the great powers to be of some utility to them in their internecine struggles. So Isaurian autonomy was tolerated[59]). The whole of the succeeding period down to the 280s/260s BC shows no appreciable change in this regard. No Hellenistic successor state ever had sufficient force at its disposal to control the highlands[60]). Seleucid Syria and Ptolemaic Egypt staked out their interests in the area after 300 by the founding of a number of ports-of-call dotted along the Mediterranean coast south of Isauria. But the role of these cities was to offer maritime staging points, and to affirm a control of the east-west sea lane along the southern coast of Anatolia, not to serve as a series of landing points for a drive into the interior. Whatever little influence these coastal towns and their parent states might have exerted over the interior quickly dissipated after 200 with the progressive collapse of the Seleucid hegemony in the region[61]).

III. Isauria and Roman Domination

When the Roman state began its expansion into the eastern Mediterranean after 200 BC, the region of Isauria/Cilicia was a borderland

58) Diod.Sic. 18.22; this record of Perdikkas' raid contains our first explicit notice of 'Isaura' and 'Isaurians'

59) Bevan, *The House of Seleucus*, I.95, referring to the contemporary situation in British India (1900).

60) Bevan, *House of Seleucus*, I.100

61) D Magie, *Roman Rule in Asia Minor to the end of the third century after Christ*, 2 vols., Princeton, 1950; reprint: New York, 1975; I.61-62, 148 ff., 278-81, esp. at 281

between the Seleucid state to the southeast, and various minor kingdoms and principalities in the center of Asia Minor. The men who directed Rome's external actions at this time were concerned above all with the major power of the east, that of Seleucid Syria. The Roman military presence in western Asia Minor was directed toward Cilicia-Isauria only insofar as the major strategic routes to the east, by land and sea, had to confront its mountainous mass. Roman military intervention in the area resulted from a concatenation of factors, amongst them the disintegration of a regional power that could no longer be made accountable to Rome for the local situation, and a 'power vacuum' in which either unwarranted local men could assert themselves or unwanted external powers could intervene; to these must be added political factors internal to the Roman state that impelled military adventurism (even amongst the not-so-adventuresome, such as Cicero). These factors, and others, make it most difficult to evaluate later accounts that explain military actions in southern Anatolia, and the assignment of 'provinces' of command to Roman consuls and praetors, as responses to the sudden and dramatic rise of 'brigandage' and 'piracy' in the region. Furthermore, although 'Cilicia' is the name given to the operational zone assigned to Roman military commanders, the mountain highlands of Isauria do not seem to have been the primary object of their attacks. Insofar as any coherent aims can be seen in their raids, they seem to have been twofold, and quite within the confines set by the actions of earlier states in the region: first, the maintenance of inland continental routes of communication over the Anatolian plateau in the hinterland, through the 'Cilician Gates' to the Adana Plain; and second, as with the immediately preceding Ptolemaic and Seleucid states, control of maritime staging points along the coast south of the Taurus in order to ensure east-west communications by that sea lane[62]).

62) R. Syme, "Observations on the Roman Province of Cilicia", (in) *Anatolian Studies Presented to W H. Buckler, Manchester (1939) 299-332* = ch. 10 (in) E. Badian, ed., *Roman Papers*, vol. 1, Oxford (1979) 120-48, at 123-35; and, at length, L. Dora Breglia Pucci (1972) 329-40, cited in n71 below

The first serious Roman effort at an intervention in the region dates to the very end of the second century when the praetorian commander Marcus Antonius was assigned *Cilicia* as his 'provincia'[63]). Antonius' expedition was backed by a law creating a praetorian 'province' of Cilicia and which called upon kings and other local governments in the area of Anatolia, Syria and Egypt to close their harbours to 'pirates'[64]). Whatever the military sphere of command assigned to Antonius, we know very little of his actual achievements. He may have raided settlements in the narrow coastal belt south of the Taurus, but there is no evidence in succeeding years of any permanent Roman military or fiscal presence in the region[65]). The assignment of a similar 'province' to Lucius Sulla in the late 90s proves no more than a continuing effort by the Roman state to deal with the strategic and tactical problems posed by the region, and nothing

63) M. Hassall, M. Crawford & J Reynolds, "Rome and the Eastern Provinces at the End of the Second Century B C. The So-Called 'Piracy Law' and a New Inscription from Cnidos (*Fouilles de Delphes*, III, 4, no. 37, AJA 1972, 64-5)", JRS, 64 (1974) 195-220, who have demonstrated that the Greek text found at Cnidos and the other Greek text found at Delphi were local versions of a law that was intended to provide a series of measures to regulate the Roman hegemony in the East at the turn of the century; 'piracy' was only part of this problem (hence the earlier title ascribed to the law is a misnomer) and indeed the references to Antonius in it are probably *ex post facto* reflections of actions the Roman state had taken a few years previously

64) Cnidos, III, 35-37, for the literary sources on Antonius' command see Livy, *Ep.* 68, Cic. *de Orat.* 1.82, *Brutus*, 188; for interpretation see A. N Sherwin-White, *Roman Foreign Policy in the East, 168 BC to AD 1*, London (1983) 97-101, essentially a replay of the arguments in his "Rome, Pamphylia and Cilicia", *JRS*, 66 (1976) 4-18.

65) I take the ἐπαρχεία of the Cnidos inscription to mean 'province' in the sense of a military command; problems of interpretation will always be with us because of the simple fact that there did not as yet exist any clear separation in the Roman vocabulary of the time between the concept of 'province' as a sphere of authority and as a territorial unit of government. The language of the Cnidos inscription betrays the problems created by this ambiguity I therefore accept the interpretation of the ἐπαρχεία of Lykaonia offered by Hassall-Crawford-Reynolds as the sensible one—that, given the deficit in official Roman jargon, it is a convoluted way of expressing the idea of a 'subprovincial' area, 'a province of the province of Asia' (which idea was later expressed more precisely by official terms like *regio* and *dioecesis*).

about any more permanent arrangements[66]). No further large-scale military intervention in the hinterland or borderlands of Cilicia is known until the operations of P. Servilius Vatia in 79-74 BC, the first in a series of men who were assigned 'Cilicia' as a consular 'province.' But the raids staged by Vatia's forces were centered in the zone to the west and south of Isauria. Only at the end of his campaigns did he attempt an attack on Isaura Vetus and Nova, apparently with some temporary success[67]). The continued autonomy of 'pirate bases' to the east in the Taurus and in the anchorages along the coast north of Cyprus, however, is suggested by the need to appoint a separate command specifically directed against 'pirates' in 74 BC that was held by Marcus Antonius, son of the homonymous praetor of 102-100[68]). It is a generally accepted conclusion that the younger Marcus Antonius' campaigns, mainly concerned with operations against Cyprus, did not achieve much in respect of a repression of 'piracy.' Certainly they did not betoken a more permanent Roman presence in Rough Cilicia itself.

The historic command held by Pompeius Magnus a decade later was essentially a land campaign, and it is in that light that we must interpret its significance for 'Isaurian piracy'. Given the navigational technology of the time, the definition of Pompeius' powers and his actual actions are quite understandable. Even if the Roman forces were to be directed against 'pirates', shipping was controlled from the

66) E. Badian, "Sulla's Cilician Command", (in) *Studies in Greek and Roman History*, Oxford (1968) 157-78 and "A Taste for Annexation", TLS (Aug. 24, 1984) 952, for a different view

67) A inscription from Bozkır, 6 km W of Zangibar Kalesi: 'Serveilius C.f. Imperator / hostibus victeis Isaura vetere / capta' (*AE* 1977 816); on Vatia's campaigns see Magie, *op.cit.*, 287-90, who rather oddly speaks of the incorporation of Isauria into the Roman province of Cilicia at this time, in spite of his further assertion that '[Vatia's] achievements, when regarded impartially, seem more spectacular than real' Sherwin-White, *op.cit.*, 152-58, interprets the campaigns as an attempt to assert, or re-assert, Roman authority over regions which had nominally been part of the Roman state's hegemony in Asia from the beginning.

68) Broughton, MRR, II, 191 f., cf. Cic. *In Verr 2.8*; Vell. Pat. II.31, Ps.-Ascon. *In Verr II*, p. 259 S, it was, apparently, an *imperium infinitum* of the type later offered to Pompeius.

land, not from the sea. Ships had to venture cautiously in a narrow sea lane, hugging the southern Anatolian coastline on their east-west passage. That made them especially vulnerable to those who might make brief forays from land bases. That was the nature of piracy[69]). 'Cleansing the seas' therefore required a land operation, and hence the extent of the *imperium*, extending to a distance 50 Roman miles inland from the coast[70]). The earlier, more contemporary literary sources accurately reflect the terrestrial nature of the command; only the later, more hagiographic accounts tend to stress the maritime aspects of Pompeius' achievement[71]). The campaigns, therefore, did not bring Pompeius' forces into contact with the Isaurian hinterland; his aim, as with those of earlier central states, was control of the coastal strip and the Adana plain. That is where he resettled the captured 'pirates' in new or refurbished cities[72]). The result of his campaigns was not so much a massive clearance of pirates from the high seas, as it was the consolidation of Roman hold over the coastal strip and a *de facto* annexation of the Adana plain. It is hardly surprising, then, that the proximate result of Pompeius' extraordinary command was the formalization of his achievements in the creation of a territorial province called *Cilicia*. But since its point of definition was the *ethne* of the Kilikes, its proprietorial significance remained vague: 'there was no province in Asia Minor the territorial meaning of which was more inconstant than the Roman province of Cilicia'[73]). What the formation of the province signified for a Roman hegemony over

---

69) See the graphic description in Ammianus 14.2.4 of piracy as the maritime face of terrestrial banditry, cf. n. 115-16 below

70) Vell. Pat. 2.31.2; cf. Plut. *Pomp.* 25.2-3 and App. *Mithr* 94 (reiterating Plutarch's information).

71) L. (Doria Breglia) Pulci, "La provincia di Cilicia e gli ordinamenti di Pompeo", RAAL, 47 (1972) 327-87, section 3, pp. 349-65 on the sources.

72) All the new urban settlements, Mallus, Epiphaneia, Soloi/Pompeiopolis were coastal ones; Adana, an apparent exception, was then much closer to the sea, and was the centre-place of the Adana plain; Soloi/Pompeiopolis was designed to serve as the Mediterranean port of tribute for the region, just as Cyinda had been earlier

73) Broughton (1933) 143

the region can hardly be deduced from the mere listing of governors subsequently assigned this 'province'.

In fact, our only good source on what Roman power actually meant for Isauria in the succeeding decades are Cicero's letters written during his governorship of the province of *Cilicia* in 51-50 BC. The situation reflected in these letters may be summarized rather succinctly. All the letters come from cities in the plains regions around the mountain highlands, most from the inland road of communications running from Ephesus, by way of Tralles, Laodicaea, Iconium, Cybistra, through the Cilician Gates to the Adana Plain. The remainder come from what was obviously the primary seat of the Roman government, the town centers of the Adana Plain, above all Tarsus[74]). The situation reflected in Cicero's letters is a rather revealing one with regard to his concept of his 'province'. It seems to have consisted of a governorship over a number of judicial dioceses located in Asia and a command over the territory along the overland route to the Adana Plain, as well as the Adana Plain itself. It is the latter region which Cicero habitually refers to as *Cilicia*, as an entity distinct from its Asian dioceses[75]). With a wholly inadequate army consisting of two decrepit legions and some auxiliaries Cicero was expected to maintain control over the overland road and the Adana Plain, a chore which he regarded as extremely difficult given the deficit of

---

74) For the corpus of 62 letters written from Asia Minor in the period see Cic. *ad Fam.* II.7, 9-15, 17-19; III.5-13, VII.32; IX.25; XIII.53-59, 61-65; XV 1-4, 6-14, *ad Att.* V 13-16, 18-21, VI.1-8. They have the following geographical distribution: Ephesus (2), Tralles (2), Laodicea (10), Synnada-Philomelium (1), Iconium (2), Iconium-Cybistra (4), Cybistra (4), Pyramos River (4), Mopsuestia (3), Pindenissum (2), Tarsos (10) and Side (3), plus 6 from unspecified locations in Cilicia. All except the three from Side are from towns on the highroad through the interior to Tarsos in the Adana Plain, or from his one brief campaign against the mountain dwellers to the east of the plain. On some of the problems involved with the primary sources see L. W Hunter, "Cicero's Journey to his Province of Cilicia in 51 B.C.", *JRS*, 3 (1913) 73-97

75) For example in *ad.Att.* 5.21.6 (end December 51) he speaks of leaving his brother in charge of Cilicia while he himself returned to Asia; at 5.21.9 he speaks of leaving his Asian dioeceses for 'Cilicia,' which he thinks of as Tarsus and the Adana Plain.

manpower[76]). Any thought of asserting dominance over the surrounding mountains was clearly out of the question. The mountains therefore remained a permanent threat to the plain.

The Amanus mountains of the anti-Taurus to the east of the Adana Plain illustrate the problem posed by autonomous highland zones to the exercise of Roman power in the region. Cicero's attempted use of military force in this case also reveals the limitations of the Roman response to the problem. The Amanus range, located between Parthian advance posts to the east and the Adana Plain to the west, represented the weak point on Rome's far eastern frontier. In the early autumn of 51 Cicero therefore decided to march to the mountains in his determination 'to crush rebellious elements of the Cilician ethnic group'[77]). He made a series of forced marches from Cybistra to the base of the mountains by 10 October. Even the foothills regions of the Amanus, however, were unsafe. In a letter of 8 October from Mopsuestia, west of Epiphaneia, Cicero reported that he was now in 'a region where news comes in very slowly, because of its remoteness and because of the banditry in the countryside'[78]). The inhabitants of the Amanus, he says, were a source of perpetual hostility that the Romans had 'to pacify'[79]). On the evening of 12 October 51 his troops advanced by quick march under the cover of darkness to the foot of the mountains and on the morning of the 13th they stormed up the mountain slopes. In one day they burned three major settlements to the ground and killed all the inhabitants. On succeeding

---

76) On his manpower and his assessment of it see Cic. *ad Att.* 5 15 1, 5 14.1 (troops rebellious because pay was in arrears), 6.5.3 (auxilaries were the backbone of the army, a feeble one in any event), *ad Fam.* 15 4.7, 16.1.5-6 (small numbers, a poor force); at *ad Att.* 6.1 14 he refers to the 30 cohorts (12,000 men) and 400 cavalry that he might be able to get from Deiotaros. It is later number that Plut. *Cic.* 36.1 seems to copy, and so is illegitimately referred to by Sherwin-Wite, *op.cit.* 29, n. 57

77) Cic. *ad Fam.* 15 1.3

78) Cic. *ad Fam.* 2.9 1-2.

79) Cic. *ad Fam.* 15 4.8 ' .pacare Amanum et perpetuum hostem ex eo monte tollere...', cf. *ad Fam.* 2.10.3, ' vexavi Amaniensis, hostis sempiternos.' (14 Nov 51, from Pindenissum).

days, many of the mountain *castella* surrounding the towns were burned to the ground. After camping for four days on the Pyramos River near Issus (13-17 October), Cicero sent his troops around the surrounding regions systematically to destroy rural settlements and buildings. He then advanced to attack the mountain village of Pindenissum, one of the fortified strongholds of the 'free Cilicians', so-named because of their tradition of perpetual armed resistance to lowland powers. They are likened by Cicero to wild savages beyond the pale of civilization[80]). These Free Cilicians had never given obedience to any king. Their land was a haven of freedom for oppressed plains dwellers, and a shelter for fugitives from the lowlands. Cicero therefore thought it necessary for the 'reputation of Roman rule' that the 'audacity' of these people be crushed as an example calculated to break the spirit of those locals who were still holdouts against the simple fact of Roman rule[81]).

It took a major seige operation lasting more than eight weeks to reduce one hilltop settlement at Erana. Nevertheless, the object lesson did have a certain effect on the other Free Cilicians of the region. Others amongst them, such as the Tebarani, who were equally criminous and arrogant in Cicero's eyes, offered hostages as a form of agreement with the Romans[82]). What Cicero's account of his campaigns in the Amanus reveals is an isolated island of Roman control in the Adana Plain that was surrounded on all sides by zones of permanent dissidence. Nor did Cicero's intrusion of violent force into the mountains go beyond the type of punitive and extractive raids of terror staged in Cilicia by the earlier Near Eastern states.

---

80) Cic. *ad Att.* 5.20.5.

81) Cic. *ad Fam.* 15.4.10: 'Confectis his rebus ad oppidum Eleutherocilicum Pindenissum exercitum adduxi. Quod cum esset altissimo et munitissimo loco ab iisque incoleretur qui ne regibus quidem umquam paruissent, cum et fugitivos reciperent et Parthorum adventum acerrime exspectarent, ad existimationem imperi pertinere arbitratus sum comprimere eorum audaciam, quo facilius etiam ceterorum animi, qui alieni essent ab imperio nostro, frangerentur '

82) Cic. *ad Fam.* 15 4.10.

When he returned to Cilicia in June of 50, after a five month stay in Asia, the situation had not changed: he found 'great banditry' in the region[83]). Cicero's campaigns did indeed bring the force of Roman arms into the mountains around the Adana Plain; but the impact of the raid (considerably exaggerated in Cicero's own estimation) was negligible in terms of a long-lasting control of the mountains. As is made clear from the beginning of the episode, even from the time of Cicero's departure from his base at Cybistra, Rome was largely dependent on personal contacts with men of power in the mountains for both surveillance and control. In the case of the Amanus that man was one Tarkondimotos[84]). The situation was no different for that which obtained in the Isaurian section of the Taurus. And Cicero's behaviour was no different. A strongman named Antipater controlled the northwestern flank of the Isaurian highlands from his castle at Derbe. Although he was easily classified as a bandit, Cicero had forged a link of *hospitium* with him—a personal power based on a face-to-face relationship struck with the 'tyrant' when Cicero negotiated passage through the lord's territory in September of 51 BC for himself and his troops. No less than five years later, in 46 BC, Cicero would feel compelled to activate this linkage in writing to the proconsul of Cilicia to request a favour for the dynast-bandit based on nothing more than this close personal relationship (*summa familiaritas*)[85]). So too, in the Amanus mountains, Tarkondimotos, not Cicero, was to remain the power to be dealt with.

---

83) Cic. *ad Att.* 6.4.1, 'magna in Cilicia latrocinia'

84) Cic. *ad Fam.* 15 1.2 (18 Sept. 51): 'A.d. xiii K. Oct., cum exercitum in Ciliciam ducerem, in finibus Lycaoniae et Cappadociae mihi litterae sunt a Tarcondimoto, qui fidelissimus socius trans Taurum amicissimusque p.R. existimatur '

85) Cic. *ad Fam.* 13 73, the favour was one of some substance, involving the personal anger of the proconsul, and the fact that he somehow had Antipater's sons in his control (as hostages?); see Syme (1939) = (1979) pt. iii, 'Antipater of Derbe', 128-31, and (1986) 162 for further elucidation; on the dynast's position see Strabo 12.1 4 (C535) where he is called a a bandit (λῃστής); 12.6.3 (C569) where Derbe is his τυραννεῖον.

The fission of the Roman state itself, beginning most severely in the late 50s and early 40s BC, produced the same response to the control of the mountain regions of southeastern Anatolia as that taken by earlier central states. Roman leaders consciously retreated to an indirect control that was negotiated through personal agents. This applied not only to Isauria, but also to the other mountain regions of the Taurus and anti-Taurus surrounding the Adana Plain: the highlands of Kataonia to the north and the Amanus mountains to the east. Typical of these local big men was Tarkondimotos, called by Cicero 'Rome's best friend' in the region. Pompeius recognized him within the context of the Roman state structure as 'a friend and ally of the Roman people'; that is to say, the indirect control was mediated through state mechanisms and the model of direct personal friendship employed by earlier powers in the region was to a degree absorbed and reformulated as an instrument of the Roman central state. With the fissioning of the Roman state, however, that critical link was cut, and Tarkondimotos became nothing less than a free man of power in the Amanus who was responsible for it and linked to Romans, this time to Marcus Antonius, by purely personal bonds: he became 'king and friend (*philos*) of Antonius'. That friendship extended as far as providing forces for Antonius and, finally, to dying on his behalf at Actium. Tarkondimotos' son, who styled himself more independently as the 'philos' of *his own father*, had his father's personal power (*dynasteia*) recognized by Octavianus/Augustus[86]).

The same reaction held for the other highlands in southeastern Anatolia. The reality of the situation with respect to these mountains was recognized both by Caesar and Antonius and later by

---

86) Strabo 14.5 18 (C676): ...ἀεὶ μὲν ὑπὸ πλειόνων δυναστευόμενον τυράννων, ἐχόντων ἐρύματα· καθ' ἡμᾶς δὲ κατέστη κύριος πάντων ἀνὴρ ἀξιόλογος καὶ βασιλεὺς ὑπὸ Ῥωμαίων ὠνομάσθη διὰ ἀνδραγαθίας Ταρκονδίμοτος καὶ τὴν διαδοχὴν τοῖς μετ' αὐτὸν παρέδωκε.; see Dio 47.26.2 for the ambiguous relationships between Tarkondimotos, Cassius, and the lowlanders of Tarsus; Dio 50 14.2 for his death at Actium; and 54.9.2 (20 BC) for Augustus' 'gift' of *dynasteia* over Cilicia to Tarkondimotos the son; for commentary see Jones, *CERP*[2], 204-05; Magie, *Roman Rule*, 1240n3, Mitford (1980) 1240

Octavianus-Augustus. Antonius (and Cleopatra) attempted to maintain direct control over critical parts of the coastal zone and otherwise forewent any pretence of direct power over the Isaurian mountains. One of the more important of these 'delegated' authorities in the region was the ancient temple-state of Olba located in the interstitial zone between the Adana Plain and the Taurus proper. Here too, however, a personal and negotiated arrangement obtained with Alba, the daughter of a 'pirate'[87]). As for the rest, in the whole period from the late 40s BC to the late first century AD, the mountain zones of the interior, and perhaps a good deal of the coast as well, were shunted off onto a series of local dynasts as 'gifts'. Cleopatra, for example, named two cities, Domitiopolis and Titiopolis in honour of two followers of Antonius—and the suspicion must be very strong, given parallel cases, that the honorifics reflected grants of baronial power over the territories around these centers[88]). Whatever precise arrangements were made by Antonius regarding the hinterland of Isauria, it seems that the mountain zone was transferred *en bloc* to Amyntas of Galatia after Actium. But the shift was not total either as regarded the coastal strip or the peripheral zones; here, as in the Amanus, many of Antonius' personal arrangements were confirmed by Augustus. Thus a certain Polemon was permitted to continue his power over the temple-state of Olba in the far southeast. Polemon was clearly a 'ritualized friend' of Antonius, and, according to the conventions normally associated with the institution, named his son Marcus Antonius Polemon after his 'friend'. The son was still confirmed in his power over the region as late at the reign of Claudius. So too, another Polemon, yet another 'ritualized friend' of Marcus Antonius, was confirmed by the triumvir in his power over a huge tract covering the northwestern flank of the Taurus, a 'tetrarchy' south of Galatia and centered on Iconium. As was typical of personal

87) For control of the coastal strip see Strabo 14.5.3 (C669); Magie, *Roman Rule*, 1287n49; on the temple state of Olba see Jones, *CERP*², 209; Magie, *Roman Rule*, 433 f. and Mitford (1980) 1241.

88) Syme (1986) 161 for the connection with the names.

politics of this sort, this Polemon must have switched sides in the war of 32; he accordingly named his son Caius Julius Polemon. That man's son, his grandson, continued to have his power confirmed by Roman emperors in the mid-first century AD[89]).

The tactic of placing the mountains in the hands of local dynasts in the form of gifts is also consistent with the actions of earlier states in Isauria. The subordinate rulers were held personally responsible for the mountain regions, but otherwise could deal with them, indeed exploit them, as they wished. None of these smaller rulers, however, had the necessary instruments of force at their disposal to enforce subordination from the inhabitants. Further, they were held by the same links of ritualized friendship that had marked earlier relationships between mountain and plain[90]). During the long period of indirect control, from the early 40s BC to the 70s AD, the Kietai in the mountains were subject to the control of surrogate dynasts of Commagene and Cappadocia. Under the powerful aegis and impetus provided by Roman imperialism, these rulers were encouraged to make attempts to establish a political integration of mountain and plain. The extension of tribute exaction was to be on a Roman model, and based on a census. But whatever other exchanges between mountain and plain the Kietai were willing to contemplate, political subor-

89) The complexity of the arrangements can probably never be fully untangled and, in any event, the fine details are not germane to the argument here; see Plut. *Ant.* 36.2; Strabo 12.6.1 (C668); Appian, *BC*, 5.75; and Dio 49.32.3 Octavianus gave most of Tracheia as a donation to Amyntas of Galatia, but took back the strategically critical coastal strip on Amyntas' death in 25 BC. The rest of Isauria was then left as a gift in the hands of Archelaus, the king of Cappadocia; for the sources see Ptolemy, 5.5.3; 5.5.8. The temple state of Olba continued to exist in the eastern Taurus; for the recognition of Marcus Antonius Polemon by Claudius as *dynastes* of the region, see Magie, *Roman Rule*, 1407n26.

90) Dio 59.8.2 (AD 37) records Augustus' original grant to Antiochus as a gift, and in 60.8.1 (AD 41) Dio labels subsequent confirmations of Commagene rule over the mountains as gifts; cf. Josephus, *Ant.J*, 19.276, with exactly the same phraseology (δωρεῖται). Josephus, *Bell.Jud.*, 7.239, reports a rather odd 'rebellion' by Antiochus under Vespasian which is put down by the governor of Syria; after seizure at Tarsus, he is sent to Rome in chains where he is treated with clemency by Vespasian τῆς παλαιᾶς ἀξιῶν φιλίας μᾶλλον αἰδῶ λαβεῖν. *Philia* was, of course, the manner in which the peculiar type of relationship was expressed.

dination was not one of them. The mountain dwellers used their peculiar knowledge of the terrain not just to resist the imposition, but to launch counterattacks on the plains below. This 'banditry' conducted by the Isaurians is recorded by the historian Cassius Dio for the first decade AD; he notes that the depredations reached the level of a full-scale war[91]). By the AD 30s their violence was sufficiently serious to necessitate the intervention of the governor of Syria, Lucius Vitellius, who dispatched one of his legates in command of 4000 legionaries and picked auxiliary troops. Siege was laid to one of the mountain strongholds, resulting in the forced surrender of its inhabitants, but with no permanent achievement[92]). Over the next two decades various groups of the Kietai, from their autonomous mountain castles, were freely threatening the coastal zone, inland towns and farmsteads. Once again, in AD 51, military assistance was sent by the governor of Syria. The military force is conceded to have been inadequate to the task, and therefore ineffective. The result was that the Commagene ruler's forces, which were able to control the coastal zone, had to enter into a negotiated settlement by using a bifurcated strategy that depended on concessions to the ordinary inhabitants of the mountains temporarily to separate them from their violent leaders[93]).

It was only after the final closure of the 'lowland' of the client kingdom of Cappadocia that the Roman state robbed itself of its last surrogate plains base for Isauria, and was left with little pragmatic

91) Dio 55.28.3, who lists it under AD 6 and claims that the Isaurians were utterly destroyed.

92 Tac. *Ann.*, 6.41 Per idem tempus Cietarum natio Cappadoci Archelao subiecta, quia nostrum in modum deferre census, pati tributa adigebatur, in iuga Tauri montis abscessit, locorumque ingenio sese contra imbellis regis copias tutabatur', until the arrival of the legate who compels the *barbari* to a *deditio*.

93) Tac. *Ann.*, 12.55· Nec multo post agrestium Cilicum nationes, quibus Cietarum cognomentum, saepe et alias commotae, tunc Troxobore duce montis asperos castris cepere atque inde decursu in litora aut urbes vim cultoribus et oppidanis ac plerumque in mercatores et navicularios audebant.. Dein rex eius orae Antiochus blandimentis adversum plebem, fraude in ducem cum barbarorum copias dissociasset, Troxobore paucisque primoribus interfectis ceteros clementia composuit.

choice but to collapse it into a provincial area. It seems, from a brief notice in Suetonius' biography of the emperor Vespasian, that this happened in the 70s[94]). But the precise nature, extent and timing of this 'provincialization' of Cilicia must remain in doubt. Josephus, for example, claims that the great-great-grandson of Herod the Great, one Alexander, who was part of a closely intertwined group of eastern dynasts, was made 'king of Ketis' by Vespasian. This is unlikely in any literal sense, but it highlights the problem of the continued existence of baronial enclaves in Cilicia, and the incomplete and rough road to making a whole province of the region[95]). Given the long-term history of the region, however, it can be no surprise that the Cilican Plains were to be 'brought out of mothballs', so to speak, in order to serve as the lowland base of control for Isauria. The move to detach the Adana Plain from the aegis of the governor of Syria, therefore, was a predictable one. The two parts of the geographical diptych were then rehinged to form the new province of *Cilicia.* In short, a plain was found for the mountain. Coincident with this move, the requisite urban centers were founded anew or refurbished in the plain[96]). It is in the succeeding period of the second and early third centuries that it might be possible to speak of a Roman hegemony in the Isaurian mountains. Some of the usual signs of external control are there: cities with imperial-sounding nomenclature, the construction of roads and some indications of law and order mediated through the cities[97]). All these items, however, deserve closer scrutiny.

The roads are significant. But only two major routes are involved, and one of these, the coastal route constructed in the reign of Hadrian, did no more than affirm control over the maritime plain

94) Suet. *Vesp.*, 8.4.

95) Josephus, *Ant.J* , 18.140; there are, in addition, textual problems. Compare the Julius Polemon who held power over only part of western Isauria and yet was dubbed 'King of Kilikia' by Josephus, *Ant.J* 20 145

96) Mitford (1980) 1244, 146-48.

97) Mitford (1980) 1248-50, with references.

that had always been the concern of central states[98]). Perhaps the surest sign of a Roman presence in the interior is the road from Anemurium on the coast directly north to Germanicopolis, thence forking northeast via Antiocheia to Laranda and northwest to Isaura Vetus[99]). Cities with imperial-sounding names likewise elicit a recognition of Roman rule. But caution is in order. Take, for example, a notice from a comparable situation from elsewhere in Asia Minor. In the marches between Phrygia and Bithynia in the later first century BC there came from the village (κώμη) of Gordion a powerful local man called Kleon. He made the village greater, turned it into a *polis*, and then re-named it *Juliopolis*. From the beginning, however, Kleon actually used another place, Kallydion, as his stronghold, a retreat and base of operations for his 'bandits'. In 40-39 he made himself useful to Antonius, but at the time of Actium, in a move characteristic of this type of personal power, he quickly shifted his resources to the supporters of Caesar. From Caesar, states Strabo, Kleon received more honour (τιμή) than he deserved: he was invested with the appearance of a dynast instead of that of a bandit[100]). In this context, the presence of a *Juliopolis* at erstwhile Gordion does not signify much, especially given the continued autonomy of operation (and recognition by the central state) of the bandit Kleon.

In Isauria, it is true, some cities did function as local centres of 'policing', but a recent and detailed study of the problem reveals the limitations of the system. All the known examples are either urban sites along the southern coast or ones located in the riverine plains extending inland from the coastal plain (Kolybrassos, Casae, Kibyra Minor, Kotenna, Sebastopolis, and Korykos). The presence of εἰρηναρχόντες ('peace officers') and other enforcers (παραφύλακες or

98) W D Burgess, *The Isaurians in the Fifth Century A.D.*, PhD Dissertation, University of Wisconsin, 1985, ch. 3, comments on the *Peutinger Table*, a cartographic production whose information on Isauria ante-dates Diocletian: only these two routes are noted, and then with some uncertainty concerning locations and distances.

99) *OGIS* 578; both roads were repaired by Septimius Severus.

100) Strabo 12.8.9 (C574).

'protection men') in the Greek-style cities of the major river valleys and coastal zone of Cilicia, therefore, tells us little about the Roman 'policing' of *Isauria Tracheia* proper[101]). One has to bear in mind constantly the degree of isolation of the coastal fringe, and its Greek-type *poleis*, from the Kilikian highlands of the interior. An off-the-cuff remark by Pausanias about a Greek athlete from one of those coastal cities is most telling: 'he came from a city on the Kilikian coast, but he had nothing to do with Kilikia except for the word'[102]). On balance, then, one has to be struck more by the simple lack of evidence for any Roman institutions of control in the highlands of Isauria throughout all of the 'high period' of Roman imperial power. As always, an argument from silence is dangerous. But given the long-term history of Isauria, the burden of proof (in the absence of any evidence) must be met by those who wish to lodge, even tacitly, the claim that there was a genuine integration of Isauria in a Roman imperial system of this time. For there is no doubt that 'Cilicians', meaning the highlanders, continued to be bracketed with other 'internal barbarians' of the empire by writers of the period. They were considered to belong to those 'undominated' peoples within the frontiers of the empire who were stigmatized by all the pejorative marks of 'barbaric' degradation[103]).

(to be continued)

---

101) K. Hopwood, "Policing the Hinterland: Rough Cilicia and Isauria", (in) S. Mitchell ed., *Armies and Frontiers in Roman and Byzantine Anatolia*, Oxford, BAR International Series, no. 156 (1983) 173-87, only one of the inscriptions (Hopwood's no. 6) comes from an inland zone, from Amblada in the territory of the Homanades.

102) Pausanias, *Hellados Periegeseos*, 5.21.10

103) Cic. *Har.Resp.* 42; Philostr *Vita Apoll.* 1.8, 1.12, 1.14, Mart. 7.30· a scurrilous poem, a personal attack on a whore who accepted all the worst of humanity to her bed; the list is limited to 'external barbarians' (Germans, Parthians, Dacians) and 'internal' ones (Cilicians, Cappadocians, Egyptians and Jews).

BRILL

Bandit Highlands and Lowland Peace: The Mountains of Isauria-Cilicia (Continued)

Author(s): Brent D. Shaw

Source: *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, 1990, Vol. 33, No. 3 (1990), pp. 237-270

Published by: Brill

Stable URL: http://www.jstor.com/stable/3632208

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at https://about.jstor.org/terms

Brill is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*

Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient, Vol. XXXIII

BANDIT HIGHLANDS AND LOWLAND PEACE: THE MOUNTAINS OF ISAURIA-CILICIA

(*continued*)

BY

BRENT D. SHAW

(Princeton)

IV The Isaurian Mountains in Late Antiquity

The situation found in the mountains of Isauria in late antiquity reveals deeply rooted continuities with the past. The patterns of relationships between mountain and plain, between highland peoples and the lowland state remain much the same. The Diocletianic breakdown of provinces subdivided the Cilician Plain, but left mountainous Isauria as a single unit[104]). The geographical base for control of the mountains, however, was still a plain; the new provincial centre was Seleukia on the Kalykadnos, the river valley forming the major 'internal plain' of the southern Taurus. The military situation reflected in the *Notitia Dignitatum* emphasizes the continued peculiarity of Isauria as a province; unlike elsewhere, there was no separation of the civil and military commands[105]). The same document reveals the continued inadequacy military resources—two legions (*Legiones II* and *III Isaura*) and some auxiliary troops, perhaps

---

104) T D Barnes, *The New Empire of Diocletian and Constantine*, Cambridge, Mass. (1982) 216, based in part on the so-called Verona List, on which see 201-08, at p. 205

105) *Notitia Dignitatum.* , ed. O Seeck, Berlin, 1876 (repr Frankfurt, 1962), *oriens*, xxix.6, 'sub dispositione viri spectabilis comitis rei militaris per Isauriam et praesidis', cf. A. H. M. Jones, *The Later Roman Empire, 284-602.* , Oxford (1964) 101, 281, Jones, *CERP*^{2}, 328; and Mitford (1980).

1500 to 2000 men in all. The *Notitia* places them 'in Isauria', but Ammianus reveals with precision that they were located at Seleukia, safely in the coastal zone[106]).

Two incidents are known from the third century which form a link between what little is known of mountain-plain relations in the Principate and the more detailed information from the fourth century. The first concerns a so-called 'rebel tyrant' from Isauria in the time when Gallienus was central emperor (AD 253-68). The man, called Trebellianus, was caught up in a labelling conflict; outsiders perceived him as an 'archpirate' and 'emperor', although his actual role was simply that of a dependable and powerful local ruler, whose very success in that role only served to highlight his autonomy from a weak central government[107]). The source that reports the story also gives a vivid, though traditional, picture of the Isaurians and their unsubdued land. The more interesting suggestion, perhaps, is the view expressed in this biography that it was roughly from this period onwards that a weakened central government in Rome was compelled to face a hard reality and to treat Isauria in effect as an internal frontier, an area within the Roman empire inhabited by 'barbarians' and 'enclosed by a new type of line of guard-posts, as if it were a genuine frontier'[108]). That is precisely the striking iconographic image of the region that we find in the illustrations of the *Notitia Dignitatum*. In it

---

106) *Notitia Dignitatum, oriens*, xxix.7-8; the missing I *Isaura* is presumably to be identified with the legion *prima Isaura sagittaria* (*Not. Dig. or* vii.20 = 56; Seeck, pp. 20 & 22) in the eastern *pseudocomitatenses* and therefore not in the provincial garrison; cf. Amm. Marc. 14.2.14, AD 353

107) SHA, *Tyr Trig* 26.1-2: ...Qua erat Trebellianum factum in Isauria principem, ipsis Isauris sibi ducem quaerentibus. Quem cum alii archipiratam vocassent, ipse se imperatorem appellavit. Monetam etiam cudi iussit. Palatium in arce Isauriae constituit. Qui quidem cum se in intima et tuta Isaurorum loca munitus difficultatibus locorum et montibus contulisset, aliquandiu apud Cilicias imperavit. That the author says that Trebellianus called himself 'emperor' (of Rome?) is surely to be taken as no more than another one of the labels generated from the perspective of the centre.

108) SHA, *Tyr Trig* 26.6-7 Denique post Trebellianum pro barbaris habentur; etenim in medio Romani nominis solo regio eorum novo genere custodiarum quasi limes includitur, locis defensa non hominibus.

the area under the aegis of the *comes per Isauriam* is vividly portrayed in colourful tones as a nest of rugged and rapidly rising mountains circled about its periphery by a system of Roman guard towers[109]). Whatever the threat the so-called Trebellianus posed, he was eventually killed by an army officer sent to the region by Gallienus. Gallienus' successor on the central throne, Claudius Gothicus, is reported to have made the traditional response of resettlement; he attempted to remove the men of violence from Isauria itself and to settle them in lowland Cilicia. He also tried to employ the device of personal power by the appointment of a close friend who was delegated to hold authority in Isauria and was held responsible for it. There is no sign that either measure succeeded in its aim[110]).

Not long after, two more incidents are reported, both in the late 270s and both involving men categorized as bandits. The first centers around a certain Lydius (a generic, 'the Lydian'?) who was born and raised in Isauria. He had learned the profession of brigandage from the cradle and had later gathered a like-minded band of men around himself to stage plundering expeditions into the surrounding regions of Pamphylia and Lycia[111]). Unable to confront units of the Roman army in the lowlands, he holed up in the town of Cremna in Pisidia to the west of Isauria. Here, under siege, he held out for a long time, but was finally killed in a classic betrayal. Somehow related to this vignette is a tale retailed in the SHA of the bandit Palfuerius who represented local forces of disorder with which the emperor Probus had to deal. Probus, the legitimate emperor, properly 'restored' Roman authority 'throughout the length and breadth of Isauria'[112]). But the

109) *Not. Dig* , Bodleian Library, MS Canon. misc. 378, folio no. 114^{v} For the *Notitia* and Isauria see ch. 2 of Burgess (1985), and figs. pp. 42 and 47

110) SHA, *Trig Tyr* 26.7 Quos quidem divus Claudius paene ad hoc perduxerat ut a suis semotos locis in Cilicia conlocaret, daturus uni ex amicissimis omnem Isaurorum possessionem, ne quid ex ea postea rebellionis oreretur

111) Zosimus, *Historia Nova*, 1 69-70; cf. F Paschoud, ed., *Zosime, Histoire Nouvelle*, t. I (Budé edition; Paris, 1971) 59-61

112) SHA, *Vita Probi*, 16.4-5· His gestis orientem petiit atque itinere potentissimo quodam latrone Palfuerio capto et interfecto omnem Isauriam liberavit, populis atque urbibus Romanis legibus restitutis. Barbarorum, qui apud Isauros sunt, vel per terrorem vel urbanitatem loca ingressus est.

same emperor is made to remark, presciently, that 'it is much easier to ward off bandits from those places than to exterminate them'. He is also reported to have undertaken a programme of settling soldiers on the land, and requiring service of the Isaurians' sons from age eighteen onwards as an institutionalized long-term solution to the problem of 'defence'. But the same passage closes with the pragmatic, and somewhat cynical, comment that the sedentarization was intended as much to prevent the soldiers themselves, and their offspring, from crossing the line into 'banditry'[113]).

Both stories are related to a popular genre of bandit tales and, as such, contain sets of subsidiary realistic details about the nature of Isauria and the Isaurians, and the problem of banditry and its control. They are structurally similar to the much better documented episodes of the fourth century found in Ammianus Marcellinus, to which we may now turn. The first of these Isaurian stories, retailed by Ammianus under the events of AD 353-54, reflects the general situation obtaining about mid-century[114]). Ammianus' account is a mixture of 'factual' narrative and classic bandit tale. Two important elements occur at the beginning of the story. First the Isaurians are portrayed as people who habitually oscillate between 'keeping the peace' and 'engaging in bandit raids.' And second, the specific cause for the outbreak of banditry in 353 is tied to the Isaurians' perception that the traditional agreements regulating the relationships between mountain and plain had been abrogated. The critical insult occurred when some of the Isaurians, who had been captured, were subject to a degrading supreme punishment: they were thrown to the beasts in the amphitheatre at Iconium to serve as a spectacle *contrary to all*

---

113) SHA, *Vita Probi*, 16.6: Veteranis omnia illa quae anguste adeuntur loca privata donavit addens, ut eorum filii ab anno octavo decimo, mares dumtaxat, ad militiam mitterentur, ne latrocinare umquam discerent.

114) Amm. Marc. 14.2; no special significance is to be attached to this episode as marking a 'new outbreak' or any other sort of novel situation since it comes immediately at the beginning of the *surviving* portions of Ammianus' history There is no reason to believe that Books 1-13, now lost, covering the years 96-352, did not contain many similar episodes.

customary practice[115]). Those words reveal a traditional arrangement which the Isaurian highlanders and lowlanders had reached—a 'moral economy' of treatment, including punishment, whose unwritten rules the latter had so callously broken.

In these troubles, the Roman soldiers quartered in the *castella* and *municipia* around the mountains were simply overwhelmed by the Isaurians' superior numbers. Ammianus would have us believe that the Isaurians were a single bandit gang, able to move rapidly from one region to another in Isauria and to appear in widely divergent regions, suddenly to surprise the locals whether beyond the river Melas in Pamphylia, at side on the south coast, or at Laranda in the north. More probably these episodes of violence were neither co-ordinated nor the actions of the same group of Isaurians, but were sudden forays into adjacent lowland areas made by various highland barons and their armed retainers. The 'bandits' at first made attacks on wealthy *vici*, but, being afflicted by severe hunger, says Ammianus, they directed their main attack on a fortified site called Palaia near the coast which was the main commissary point for the whole of the Roman army guarding the Isaurian frontier. It seems reasonable to speculate that this point must have been located on the south coast near the estuary of the Kalykadnos River. In any event, after an unsuccessful attempt to take this food store, the Isaurians turned their attention to the southern control center of Isauria, Seleukia on the Kalykadnos, where the three legions of the Roman army were stationed under the command of the *comes* Castricius[116]). The result of armed encounter which ensued, colourfully written up by Ammianus, makes clear that the best the Roman force could do was barely to hold its own behind the fortifications of the city. The episode then ends abruptly as the Isaurians disperse back to their mountains. Ammianus attributes their dispersal to their knowledge of the fact that the central Roman government had dispatched

115) Amm. Marc. 14.2.1.
116) Amm. Marc. 14.2.14.

emergency forces to the spot under the command of Nebridius, the *comes Orientis*[117]). Ammianus' final judgment, that the Isaurians dispersed as they were accustomed to do under such circumstances, betrays his statist bias. He acknowledges that the bandits' operative behaviour included sudden hit-and-run forays in which retreat from lowland bases was the norm. Nowhere does Ammianus suggest that the Roman army habitually pursued the Isaurians into their mountain retreat, or ever attempted to institute a permanent armed control over the highlands.

Ammianus gives notice of another 'outbreak' of banditry in Isauria in the late 350s. It is in the same decade as a general description of the Roman empire and its resources specifies Isauria as a land noted for its strong men, leaders who sometimes involve themselves in *latrocinium*. Their 'brigandage' is then tied to their desire to oppose the Romans, in which aim, says the compiler, they were not able to win the name 'the unbeaten'[118]). Ammianus reports the Isaurians at this time as 'having long been quiet' (i.e. for about four or five years at best) since their last attack on Seleukia. The revival is portrayed as a horrifying rebirth of 'snakes slithering forth from their holes at the beginning of spring'. Once again he describes vividly the unfair advantage of the Isaurians' devious knowledge of their mountains and inaccessible paths; as they descended on their neighbours for theft and banditry, their skills as mountaineers enable them to avoid the advance posts of the Roman army[119]). The manner of the response by the Roman state to this threat is, however, significant. Bassidius Lauricius was dispatched to the region with the rank of *comes* as the *rector* or governor[120]). His brief was to settle the situation by use of force *or by negotiation*. We know that Lauricius did use force

117) Amm. Marc. 14.1.20

118) *Expositio totius mundi et gentium*, 45, ed. J Rougé, Paris (1966) pp. 180-81, Rougé dates the document (perhaps too?) precisely to AD 359 (see p. 19).

119) Amm. Marc. 19 13 1

120) For the man see A. H. M. Jones, J R. Martindale, and J Morris, *The Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire, I. AD 260-395*, Cambridge, 1971 (henceforth *PLRE*, I), P 497

to clear the plains along the Kalykadnos upstream from Seleukia, and that his categorization of the enemy was the same as that employed by Ammianus: they were *latrones* or 'bandits'[121]). But, given the limited scope of these actions, it seems probable that he succeeded more by the judicious use of force as threat, followed by negotiation. The result that Lauricius obtained was not domination of the mountains, but rather a stabilization of the *status quo* between mountain and plain wherein the 'province' of the lowland cities was barely maintained[122]).

The final report by Ammianus comes from a period about five years later in AD 366/67. It is an unusual, but revelatory, incident. Groups of 'bandits' were attacking regions neighbouring the mountains, wealthy town centres, private farmsteads and villas—which depredations were made with little opposition from the army or state. The Roman governor of Isauria at the time, one Musonius, whose only qualification for his new job was his experience as a teacher of rhetoric at Athens, was 'surprised' by this state of affairs. The fact that no one seemed willing to resist the 'bandits,' and that the army seemed especially caught up in this lack of will, moved him to action. He enlisted the service of a posse of local enforcers or 'pursuit men' (*diogmitae*) to attack the marauders, should the opportunity present itself[123]). The result was a disaster for the Roman administrator and his band. They were massacred. The Isaurian 'bandits' then continued their raids in all directions and were not contained until Roman troops were called in and were able to reinstate control of the

---

121) It is known because an inscription from a site on the Kalykadnos, Tschakur, has survived: *ILS* 740 = *CIL* III, 6733,'Iussu dd. nn. Constantii triumfatoris / Augusti et Iuliani Caesaris / castellum diu ante a latronibus / possessum et provinciis perniciosum / Bassidius Lauricius v.c. com. et / praeses occupavit ad[q]ue ad perpe/tuam [q]uietis firmitatem militum / praesidio munitum Antiocham / nuncupavit' The 'Antioch' concerned is otherwise unidentified, but it is probably the same stronghold later used by Longinos of Selinos in the 490s AD, see n157 below

122) Amm. Marc. 19 13.2.

123) Amm. Marc. 27.9 6.

lowlands. The 'bandits' then retreated to their highlands where, Ammianus admits, they were safe. Ammianus then reports the result: a restabilization of the former balance between the two sides. Once again he makes clear the elements in this settlement: an agreement (*pax*) was sought and struck between the two sides, confirmed by an exchange of hostages. Ammianus narrates all of this in a one-sided way: it is the 'bandits' who request the *pax* and it is they alone who provide the hostages upon request. More important is his note of the role played by go-between agents, the Germanicopolitani, in this process. Germanicopolis was the major urban settlement in the heart of Isauria; though apparently established, or at least renamed, at some time in the late first to mid-second century AD, its precise status throughout the whole period is unknown. Apparently the inhabitants of the town not only had a special 'military role' in the Isaurian raids, but also a special 'political' position and authority as a result of which their opinions were listened to by the other Isaurians[124]).

The vignettes retailed by Ammianus leave us wanting more detail concerning the reality behind the statist label of *latro* he so freely deploys in his Isaurian stories. More precisely, one would like to have a more strictly functional and descriptive account of the day-to-day realities of the ebb and flow of violence between highland and lowland. We know that the two were linked, at very least, by an economy of transhumant pastoralism, vividly described by Cicero and confirmed by the widespread identification of the economic emblems of Cilicia as its wool and woolen garments, goats and goat-hair fabrics[125]). To know how these economic and cultural exchanges related, if at all, to political domination we must be able to trace their significance in more mundane relationships. It is rare, however, that we ever get a closer 'ground level' view of social relationships in Isauria. As is often the case in antiquity, such evidence is only pro-

124) Amm. Marc. 27.9 7

125) Cic *de Div.* 1 42; Artemidorus, *Oneir* 4.83, Varro, RR, 2.11 12; Cic. *Verr* 2.1.38.95; Ps.-Ascon. 12.46; Livy 38.7 10; Veget. 2.14.3, *Dig* 19 1 17, 33 7 12; Mart.*Ep.* 14.148; Jer *Ep.* 71 7, 108.15

vided by the more popular Christian literature of the later empire. In the case of Isauria that dossier is well represented by the corpus on the life and miracles of Saint Thekla. The compilation, usually attributed to Basil of Caesarea, is in fact a layered composition of varying sources and dates that was probably edited in the fifth century[126]). The account centres on the world of Thekla, a Cilician woman who was converted to Christianity, supposedly in the later first century AD. After her death a shrine, *Hagia Thekla*, was set up to her in the countryside outside Seleukia on the Kalykadnos.

The social world reflected in the literary compositions focussed on Thekla's life and deeds, and the subsequent history of her shrine, is probably a composite one that mirrors general conditions in Isauria in the period from the second to the fourth centuries AD. The salient characteristic of this world is that it is a dichotomous one. One part consists of the network of towns, villages, farms and houses (*poleis, komai, agroi* and *oikoi*) that made up the 'civilized' world of the plains. The other world, that of the mountains, is stigmatized as a domain of 'tribes' or of ethnicity (*ethnê*). Thekla's world is wholly that of the 'civilized' environment, that of the towns and cities. Not even the *chora* and *komai* attached to these cities provide any characters in her drama[127]). The plains 'civilisation' is surrounded and dominated by the countryside and mountains; centres above and beyond the plains zone that had urban pretentions, like Dalisandros, were regarded as shadows of the real thing, mere excuses for genuine towns[128]). In the plains, however, the towns and cities themselves, each a miniature clone of a model Greek *polis*, were isolated from each other and surrounded by what they called 'bandit neighbours' and 'bandit hinterlands'[129]). The 'bandits' are seen as men who are powerful

126) See G Dagron, *Vie et miracles de sainte Thècle: texte grec, traduction et commentaire*, Bruxelles, Société des Bollandistes (1972) for the standard edition; he places the final corrections and additions around 469

127) Dagron, *Vie et miracles*, 110-11

128) *Mir* 26, 1-4 = Dragon, *Vie et miracles*, 356-57

129) *Mir* 13, 12-14 = Dragon, *Vie et miracles*, 324-25· ἐπήμυνε τῇ πάσῃ Ἑώᾳ καμνούσῃ καὶ λῃϊζομένῃ ὑπὸ τῆς γείτονος καὶ λῃστρίδος χώρας πάντα δι'ὧν κακῶς ἅμα ἔφυσέ τε καὶ ἤνεγκε ποινηλατούσης.

enough to appropriate the social position of masters and rulers ('tyrants') in their own right[130]). They are portrayed as embodiments of folly, madness, disorder, audacity, excess and the sacrilegious. The saint, on the other hand, is the heroine of the civilized world of the lowlands. The power emanating from her shrine is able to confuse bandits who are attempting to retreat into 'banditland' following their raids, to drive them mad, to disorient them and, finally, to draw them down into the plains where Roman soldiers are able to cut their throats[131]). The frontier between the two worlds is one that is marked at its edges by the perpetual threat or actual occurrence of violent acts. What deals can be struck between the two sides are guaranteed by the harsh method of exchanging hostages[132]).

This world is also well evoked in the hagiographic accounts of the life and death of the holy man Konon from Bidana, a small village near Isaura Vetus[133]). These accounts, like those of the holy woman Thekla, were surely late in composition, though they claim, as with Thekla, that Konon was a first-century personality—indeed the first protagonist in the Christianization of the region around Isaura. The

---

130) *Mir* 28.11-16 = Dragon, *Vie et miracles*, 362-63 Λέγεται γὰρ ὡς τὸν ναὸν τοῦτον τὸν αὐτῆς οἱ κακῶς ἡμῖν οὗτοι προσοικοῦντες ἀλιτήριοι καὶ ποτὲ μὲν ἐν πολεμίων μοίρᾳ τὰ τῇδε λῃζόμενοι ποτὲ δὲ ἐν δεσποτῶν τάξει καὶ τυράννων πάντα σφετεριζώμενοι πάντα διαρτάζοντες καταδραμόντες δὲ ποτὲ τὸν νεῶν τοῦτον καὶ εἶλον καὶ ἠνδραποδίσαντο ὡς ςάχρυσόν τε καὶ μυρίῳ πλούτῳ κοσμούμενον.

131) *Mir* 28.24-34 = Dragon, *Vie et miracles*, 362-65

132) *Mir* 19.2-6 = Dragon, *Vie et miracles*, 340-41 'A certain well-born woman from Ketis, Bassiana (for that was her name) was with us as a hostage (ὡμῆρευε μὲν παρ ἡμῖν) in accordance with certain agreements (ἐπί τισι συνθήκαις) which promised us peace instead of banditry (ἐκ λῃστείς εἰρήνη), the basis of which peace was guaranteed by the body of this woman.'

133) For the documentation see F Halkin, "S. Conon l'Isaurien", *Analecta Bollandiana* 53 (1935) 369-74 on the Slavonic translation of a life, which was, at the time, the only surviving source on Konon, cf. R. Trautman & R. Klostermann, "Drei griechische Texte zum Codex Suprasliensis", *Zeitschrift für slavische philologie* 11 (1934) 1-21, 299-324, since that time a full Greek version has been discovered (Patmos mss, fol. 36-50 = *BHG* 2079) which has been published, also by F Halkin, "Vie de S. Conon d'Isaurie", *Analecta Bollandiana* 103 (1985) 5-34. Bidana, as we known information in the Slavonic life, was located 18 stades (= c. 2.25 Roman miles) north of Isauropolis (= Isaura Vetus), 40 (Roman) miles south of Iconium.

New Testament books record that Paul the apostle preached at Derbe and Lystra. But the hagiography of Konon, in a revealing moment, states that Paul, a native of lowland Tarsus after all, deliberately decided *not* to evangelize in the Taurus Mountains. Doubtless, as a native inhabitant of southeastern Anatolia, Paul knew what that would entail. The evangelization of the mountains therefore required a local man and, since the word could not be brought in by any Paul, some form of direct divine intervention was needed. This role was performed by the archangel Michael. Konon was converted by the divine messenger, then persuaded his own parents, and began his great deeds in Isauria.

In his struggles and battles to win over the locals to the new view of the world, Konon is made to conform to the usual type of the agonistic holy man: he challenges the local armed rowdies to duels (more precisely to a race, which, with divine assistance, he wins), confronts local evil spirits and hostile demons and wins, again with divine assistance. But the account of his heroic feats also reveals, in a more mundane way, a violent world already firmly based on personal power, a social idiom to which the holy man could relate rather easily: a world rent by a division between lowland civilisation and montane barbarism, an environment where mountains are normally marked and controlled by 'nests' of brigands[134]). In this environment, it is significant that Konon first gained renown as a holy detective who solved robberies made by bandits. He even confronted the bandits directly, often in combination with evil spirits and fearful demons. Konon, however, was able to prevail in all these encounters. Of symbolic importance was his ability to 'convert' the bandits and demons, not only in a spiritual sense, but also in an economic one, by turning them from wandering and free pastoralists to cultivators of the land who became his slaves. These brigands were encountered by Konon, exactly as in Ammianus, as serpents slithering out of

134) Some of them were especially noted for this, as for example Λίγραμμον mountain in the Slavonic account.

mountain crevices. And the vivid descriptions of the bandits reflect almost to a word the 'wild man' type we have already seen in Nepos' life of Datames. They have wild hairy heads, frightening faces, terrible eyes; they are a degraded form of humanity 'having become savages or demons'[135]). They habitually make their life by ambushing wayfarers on the roads, but the saint, with the coercive assistance of his angels, exhorts them to 'a better life'.

The day-to-day events, most rather mundane, recounted in the 'Life, Politics and Battles of the Holy Witness and Wonderworker Konon', as well as in the *Miracles* of Thekla, have the ominous feel of a society locked in a perpetual state of seige. The tenuous frontier of the lowland towns and villages depended on a constant linkage with the power of a central state to maintain a precarious equilibrium. What might happen if that containment was ruptured is adequately illustrated by the final set of episodes in later Roman history in which Isaurians figure on a large scale. These vignettes are centered on the imperial court at Constantinople and on the whole period of the last half of the fifth century AD[136]). It was a period when the vertical lines of power in the eastern empire became so fluid that powerful men from Isauria were able to rise to positions of high rank in the external world of the Roman state—even to the final step of becoming the emperor of Rome itself. For the most part, the more powerful and successful of these men were never labelled 'bandits', even though thier power, origins, behaviour and other characteristics were no different from those of Ammianus' *latrones*. The reasons why these Isaurians became acceptable, even briefly, as rulers, much less

135) For the cross identification of bandits and demons in general see G J Bartelink, "Les démons comme brigands", *Vigiliae Christianae* 21 (1967) 12-24.

136) For some standard accounts in English, none of them satisfactory, see J B. Bury, *History of the Later Roman Empire from the Death of Theodosius I to the Death of Justinian*, 2 vols., reprint: New York (1958) I, 314-23, 389-402; and A. H. M. Jones, *The Later Roman Empire, 284-602: A Social, Economic and Administrative Survey*, 3 vols., Oxford (1964) I, 221-30; the standard non-English account is pervasively textual and concentrates on the whole episode from the perspective of the state: E. Stein, *Histoire du Bas-Empire*, Paris-Bruges, 1949 (reprint: Amsterdam, 1968), esp. vol. 2, 9-10, 28-31 and 82-84.

being stigmatized as bandits, had less to do with any metamorphosis of the Isaurians themselves than it did with structural changes in the Roman state.

Isaurians were certainly no less prone to violent acts and to accusations of banditry in this period than in any other. In the early 380s we know that a defensive wall had to be built in great haste to protect the coastal city of Anemurium, and that this project must in some way be connected with the appearance of a new legion, the *Legio Pseudocomitatensis I Armeniaca*, in Isauria under the command of the *Comes Isauriae* Matronianus[137]). And when the pilgrim Egeria was travelling through Cilicia and the southern Taurus in the mid 380s she noted that the shrine of Thekla, a mere mile and half outside Seleukia, was walled around to protect it from bandit raids by Isaurians 'who are hostile, and always commit robberies'[138]). But in the opening years of the fifth century (AD 403-06) the mountaineers were able to take advantage of the weakened condition of central-state forces in the region, battered by attacks by the Goths, to begin more extensive incursions into the surrounding plains areas, especially towards the heart of Cappadocia to the north, some of their forays also going as far afield as northern Syria and Cyprus to the south. Violent 'bandit' activity also threatened towns, like Kokusos and Arabissos in the heartland of Kataonia, to the east of Cappadocia and just to the north of the Adana Plain. However particularistic this resurgence of the mountain dwellers of southeastern Anatolia was, it was uniformily attributed to 'Isaurians' in general[139]). An imperial

137) E. Alföldi-Rosenbam, "Matronianus, Comes Isauriae: An Inscription from the Sea Wall of Anemurium", *Phoenix*, 26 (1972) 183-86; cf. C. P Jones, "The Inscription from the Sea-Wall at Anemurium", *ibid.*, 396-99 for an improved reading: the wall was actually constructed by a prefect, Eusebius, of the first Armenians. Further on Matronianus' activities, see the new inscription from Yanikhan, S. Hill, "Matronianus, *Comes Isauriae*: an Inscription from an Early Byzantine Basilica at Yanikhan, Rough Cilicia", *AS*, 35 (1985) 93-97

138) *Peregrinatio Aetheriae*, 23 1-7, cf. J Wilkinson, *Egeria's Travels*, London (1973) 121-22, 288-92; she journeyed through the region in May of 384.

139) Eunapius, frgs. 84, 86; Zosimus, *Historia Nova*, 5.25; Sozomen, *Hist. Eccl.* 8.25; Marcellinus (cited henceforth from Th. Mommsen, *Chronica Minora,*

law of 408 affirmed that none of the periods of grace normally granted to ordinary criminals, including the Easter remiss, were to be permitted in the trial by torture of Isaurian 'bandits' in order to uncover the plots of 'evil men'[140]). By the early 440s their raids are again noted by historical sources, surely not because they had been dormant in the intervening period but because the powerful men behind them were now seen as 'more important' from a centerist perspective[141]). The first of these Isaurians to reach a position of great importance was one Flavius Zenon, whose native Isaurian name is unknown. In AD 447 the emperor Theodosius entrusted the defence of Constantinople, then bearing the brunt of Attila's renewed attacks, on Zenon and his armed Isaurians who were then in the capital[142]). Zenon rose quickly in the emperor's service, receiving the consulship in the next year, and control of all military forces in the east in 449; indeed he

---

II = *MGHaa*, 11, Berlin, 1894), sa., 405; Philostorgius, 11.8; Jerome, *Ep.* 114.1, cf. Dagron, *Vie et miracles*, 118; Palladius, *Dial.* 16 refers to Isaurians attacking Rossos and Seleukia in Pieria which Malalas dates to AD 403 For some of the details on the period that follows see C. E. Minor, "The Robber Tribes of Isauria", *Ancient World* 2 (1979) 117-27, at 123 f., esp. n32-25, 39 for references to the letters of Chrysostom that give detailed accounts of the violent bandit attacks in Cappadocia and Kataonia.

140) *CTh* 9.35 7 (26 Feb. 408): Provinciarum iudices moneantur, ut in Isaurorum latronum quaestionibus, nullum quadragensimae ne venerabilem pascharum diem existiment excipiendum, ne differatur sceleratorum proditio consiliorum, quae per latronum tormenta quaerenda est, cum facillime in hoc summi nominis speretur venia, per quod multorum salus et incolumitas procuratur

141) Priscus, F 6 = L. Dindorf, *Historici Graeci Minores* (henceforth Dindorf, *HGM*), p. 286.14, Marcellinus, sa., 441

142) Priscus F.8 = Dindorf, *HGM*, p. 320.5; E. A. Thompson, "The Isaurians under Theodosius II", *Hermathena* (1946) 18-31, at 18-19; Thompson traces the rise of the Isaurians to the emperor's dissatisfaction with the German military officers in his army (at pp. 20-23) which is indeed a good proximate reason for the shift in power at the centre, though it does not seem to offer a good longer range explanation of why the Roman state was disposed to accept these foreign cadres of officers in the first place, and why the Isaurians were at hand to be selected. Zenon himself was already in Constantinople with Isaurians at the time, many of whom he had 'recruited' as violent freebooters who were committing massive acts of 'piracy' off the coast of Rhodes at the time. See J R. Martindale, *The Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire, II. AD 395-527*, Cambridge, 1980 (henceforth *PLRE*, 2), 'Fl. Zenon (6)', 1199-1200

became so powerful that in 450 he was suspected of a plot to set himself up as a 'tyrant'[143]).

What was the source of the Isaurians' power? A reference to Flavius Zenon's forces as originating in bands of 'pirates' is a clue. These Isaurians, we know, had been widely recruited throughout the eastern empire as quasi-professional men of violence by those paragons of the Roman order, the private landowners, in order to act as hired enforcers on their estates. As such the armed Isaurian gangs had a rather dubious relationship to the legal power of the state; at the same time as they underwrote the power of the private landowners who were the civic pillars of the state, their very presence was a palpable danger to the state's ability to maintain its hegemony of violence. Emperors attempted to curb the use of such private armed gangs, but in a way that reflected their reluctance to encroach too much on the position of the landowners, especially given the emperors' inability to provide a viable alternative of armed protection[144]). This upward filtration of Isaurians through the power structure of the empire, just as that of 'external barbarians' at this same time, cannot be explained by the dominant 'civic model' now commonly used as an explanation of élite power holding in the empire, that is, the extension of membership in the Roman state via citizenship, acculturation, politicization of local élites, and centralized patronage and advancement[145]). The upward movement was

---

143) John of Antioch F 199 = C. Müller, *Fragmenta Historicorum Graecorum* (henceforth *FHG*), Paris, 1851 (reprint: Frankfurt, 1975) IV, p. 613, Priscus F.8 & 14 = Dindorf, *HGM*, p. 320.8 & 30

144) One of these emperors was Leo I, see *CJ* 9 12.10.pr -1 (AD 468): .omnibus per civitates et agros habendi bucellarios vel Isauros armatosque servos licentiam volumus esse praeclusam. Quod quis. armata mancipia seu bucellarios aut Isauros in suis praediis aut iuxta se habere temptaverit. ., an extension of the *Lex Iulia de vi publica seu privata*; 9 12.10.2 outlines the penalties of those who so threatened state power; cf. Thompson (1946) 25

145) Thompson (1946) 26 also pointed out that it is not a strictly personal phenomenon; there were many other Isaurian big men on the rise at this time, independently of Zenon, most of them very imperfectly known, such as a certain Neon who became governor of Euphratensis in AD 431-32; see Theodoret, *Epp.* 37, 39 and 40, and 'Neon (1)' in *PLRE*, 2, 776.

made possible by a peculiar fissioning of the Roman state itself, which in turn enabled the autonomous violent and powerful men of an enclave within the empire, like Isauria, systematically to move out of it and to seep upwards through the fissures. The Isaurians remained in positions of power throughout the 450s, but it was in the early 460s that their great ascent began.

This manifestation of power at the top is represented by an Isaurian whose native name is known in a variety of forms, of which Tarasikodissa seems the most probable[146]). Tarasikodissa was a typical powerful baron of the Isaurian mountains whose manipulation of violent force and usefulness to certain private individuals in the fragmenting Roman state outside Isauria allowed him to rise in authority. When he arrived in Constantinople in the mid 460s he had changed his name to the more acceptable Flavius Zenon, modelling himself, it is said, on his illustrious Isaurian predecessor of the previous generation. Men like Tarasikodissa, however, not only moved out of Isauria to take advantage of opportunities abroad; they also had to maintain their bases in Isauria against their traditional competitors. The balance was not always an easy one. In the very year he ascended to the consulship in Constantinople (AD 469) Tarasikodissa had to use Roman troops to consolidate his home in Isauria and to restrain the raids of one Indakos Kottunes. Kottunes was the son of another Isaurian 'brigand chief', one Papirios, who had conducted violent raids over large parts of Isauria from his fortified stronghold in the mountains, the *castellum Papirii*. Kottunes was using his father's base to extend his own[147]).

---

146) Sources noted in 'Fl. Zenon (7)', *PLRE*, 2, 1200-02, esp. Candidus, F 1 = *FHG*, IV, p. 435-37 For some of what follows the old, but still useful, paper by E. W Brooks, "The Emperor Zenon and the Isaurians", *EHR*, 30 (1893) 209-38, may be consulted. Brooks tended to see the significance of the Isaurians within the rather narrow central political confines of the 'decline and fall' argument, but reached some conclusions on the relations of the late Roman state to Isauria that seem unpalatable to certain historians to the present day

147) On Kottunes see 'Cottunes', *PLRE*, 2, 590-91, on his father Papirius see *ibid.*, 831, John of Antioch, F.206-2 = *FHG*, IV, 616-17, is the main source. For

But Kottunes 'the bandit' was less of a threat to Tarasikodissa than was another 'brigand' back home, a powerful man known as Illous who joined the opposition to the 'risen bandit' Flavius Zenon, who ascended the throne of the Roman empire in February of 474[148]). In this struggle between centre and periphery, it was more the old style of highly personal types of power that tended to dominate in their relationships. Especially important was the exchange of hostages, including close relatives, to seal personal loyalties. About AD 475 Illous and his partners had seized Flavius Zenon's brother Longinos and held him hostage in his mountain castle for a period of ten years[149]). The need to manipulate personal connections, at once such a strong and yet precarious source of power, compelled the toleration of apparent contradictions, for it was during this same period that Illous is recorded as having entered into a relationship of ritualized friendship (*philia* in Candidus' words) with Zenon[150]). But 'home base' in Isauria remained critically important for these men in what was, after all, a rather fragile 'empire'. So Zenon himself had to retreat to Isauria between January of 475 and midsummer 476 when his power in Constantinople was successfully challenged by Basiliskos. These configurations of power were also characterized by sudden shifts necessitated by the considerable inherent weaknesses of personal resources. When Illous' partners in Isauria seemed unable to carry out their part in the resistance to Zenon, Illous switched sides and left Isauria in 476 to join his erstwhile enemy, Zenon, in Constantinople. While in the capital, however, he related to his

---

native Isaurian parallels of the names see Ramsay (1904) cited in n182 below, 273 no. 6 (Indakos, from a village site just north of Isaura Nova), 279 no. 15 (Kottonios, from Isaura Nova).

148) See 'Illus (1)', *PLRE*, 2, 586-90; he had two brothers, one of whom was known as Appalus Illous Trokundes; and two daughters, one of whom, incidentally, bore the name Thekla.

149) See 'Fl. Longinus (6)', *PLRE*, 2, 689-90; the Graeco-Roman 'Longinus', like 'Zenon', must be a standard translation of some Luwian name, as is made clear from the other entries in *PLRE* at this point.

150) Candidus, F 1 = *FHG*, iv, p. 136: καὶ ὡς Ἴλλους συνέβη Ζήνωνι εἰς φιλίαν..

opponents there in much the same way as did Zenon, by using Isauria as a safe 'dumping-ground' where they could be kept. Feuds from back home that were continued in Constantinople, as for example in the case of one Epinikios from Phrygia, were solved by deporting the threat back to Illous' strongholds in Isauria[151]). In this jockeying for power, the Isaurians in the capital continued to exploit friends and relatives as a principal resource. Indeed, when Flavius Zenon (ex-Tarasikodissa) and Illous began to fall out after 483, Zenon demanded the return of his hostage brother; with the final break, Zenon moved to dismiss Illous' friends and relatives from Constantinople and to assign all their property in Isauria to cities in the region[152]). When Illous found himself branded as a 'rebel' in 484, he naturally retreated to his home base in Isauria, the *castellum Papirii*. Flavius Zenon then turned to other Isaurians to fill the vacuum created by Illous' departure. First he appointed one Kottumenes as *Magister Militum* for the East[153]). Zenon then directed another Isaurian man of violence, one Leontios, to take an armed force against Illous to subdue him. Once again, however, the networks of personal allegiances within the mountain region asserted their dominance. When Leontios re-entered Isauria he switched sides and joined Illous in resistance to the very man, the emperor of Rome, who had sent him. Illous and Leontios did manage to hold out for four years until the place was betrayed to the forces of the central government, and the two men were captured and executed[154]). But the man whom Zenon sent to repress the rebellion and who was

---

151) On Epinikios see *PLRE*, 2, 'Epinicius', 397, John of Antioch, F.211.1 = *FHG*, IV, 618.

152) John of Antioch, F.214.1 = *FHG*, IV, 620

153) John of Antioch, F.214.6 = *FHG*, IV, 621, *PLRE*, 2, 327

154) For Illous' ally see 'Leontius (7)', *PLRE*, 2, 670-71, a native of Dalisandros and of obscure parentage; he was a man of violence whose rise to power was based on his experience in fighting: Theophanes, *AM*, 5972. He had initially sided with Flavius Zenon, under whom he achieved the rank of *patricius* and consul (by 484). Another ally of Illous was one Longinos, perhaps the son of Zenon's brother, see *PLRE*, 2, 'Longinus (2)', 687

finally successful in that aim was also an Isaurian, one Lilingis[155]).

Upon Zenon's death in 491, it was not his brother Longinos, nor any other Isaurian who succeeded to power, but the relatively obscure Anastasios. A more unified state meant that court politics were governing a new distribution of power at the centre; but this did not mean that the Isaurians were about to accept the new order. Resistance in Isauria was led by the same Lilingis who had been sent to establish order there by Zenon, and by the 'Longinos brothers'. Another Longinos, from Kardala in Isauria, was amongst the Isaurians dismissed from Constantinople in 491. He was able successfully to retreat to his base in Isauria where he was reported to have gathered a personal army of 15,000 men about himself, and to have obtained large supplies of arms and provisions from a store set up in the region by Zenon (Tarasikodissa). But his forces and those of Lilingis were defeated in a battle near Kortyaeon in Phrygia in 492. Longinos nevertheless continued to conduct raids from his mountain strongholds until his capture and beheading in 497[156]). In spite of these successful strikes by the central government Isauria remained a region effectively outside the direct control of the Roman state, the home of men like Longinos of Selinos, who controlled mountain fortresses in the region of Antioch in Isauria until his capture in 498, when he too was taken to Constantinople and beheaded[157]). Whereas it is perhaps true, therefore, that the Isaurian men of violence found themselves effectively excluded from further control of political power at the centre of the empire, it does not follow, as is sometimes claimed, that Isauria itself was 'pacified' or brought within the domination of the Roman state[158]). In the reign

155) A native Isaurian, the spelling of whose name also varies widely, see *PLRE*, 2, 683-84, the kinship connection is here again: he was a half-brother of the very Illous whom he was sent to control; he too was a man who had risen to power on a tide of violence, see Suid. B. 279

156) See 'Longinus (3)', *PLRE*, 2, 688. John of Antioch, F.214b = *FHG*, IV, 621, Theophanes, *AM*, 5985-87

157) See 'Longinus (4)', *PLRE*, 2, 688.

158) The position taken by Jones, *LRE*, I, 230-31, for which I can see no

of Justinian, Isaurian highlanders were still a reservoir of violence that could be tapped by Roman emperors for their own interests. Throughout the sixth century Isaurians continued to form large contingents of mercenaries in the ranks of imperial armies[159]).

Violence of the kind that typified the region in earlier centuries continued to mark relations between mountain and plain in this very late period. A rescript of Justin and Justinian of 527 promised to defend the property of a borderland church in Pamphylia, and its peasants, from bandit attacks[160]). Much of the violence was perpetrated by local 'tyrants' who had bands of armed retainers in their service, and who used violence to coerce locals and to increase their landed wealth by what the laws frankly label *latrocinium*[161]). The situation in the region seems to have remained within the usual

---

justification in the evidence itself: 'But this time the pacification of the country was thorough. The mountain strongholds were demolished and thousands of Isaurian prisoners were transported and settled on waste lands in Thrace. Henceforth the Isaurians played no part in politics, though they continued to serve in large numbers in the Roman armies.' The last phrase gives the lie to the whole; as for the transportation of violent men out of the region, that had been a consistent policy of central states from the Assyrians through Pompeius Magnus to Claudius Gothicus, and with not much to show for it. That is why it remained an ongoing part of the repertoire of central-state responses to the region, see P Charanis, "The Transfer of Population as a Policy in the Byzantine Empire", *CSSH*, 3 (1960-61) 140-54, for its continuity

159) See, e.g., Procop. *Bell. Goth.* 1.5.2-5, 2.7.35-38, 10 19, 12.26-41, 3.6.2-5, 36.1-3, 7-28, amongst other passages; the contingents in question numbered 3000 men and more. They were used primarily in campaigns in the west in the AD 530s-550s. For a full list see Minor (1979) 126n59

160) H. Grégoire, *Recueil des inscriptions grecques-chrétiennes d'Asie mineure*, I, Paris (1929; reprint: Amsterdam, 1968) no. 314 = CIL, iii, 13640, from the village of Küçük Ali Fahreddin; cf. C. Diehl "Rescrit des empereurs Justin et Justinien du 1er juin 527", BCH, 17 (1893) 501-20; where the main problem is the violence committed on the local inhabitants by soldiers in transit, and by officers specially appointed to repress brigands.

161) For the phenomenon in general see C. Lecrivain, "Etudes sur le Bas Empire, III. Les soldats privés au Bas Empire", MEFR, 10 (1890) 267-83 (through with too much fascination with it as something typical of 'decline' and of 'the late empire'); for the situation in Anatolia see Nov 30 7 1 ('De Proconsule Cappadociae', AD 536); and *Edict*, 8.pr ('De Revocatione Vicarii Ponticae', AD 548).

bounds of violence. In AD 535 a number of parallel laws were issued by the emperor pertaining to several of the provinces of Asia Minor, including the Hellespontine region, Pontus-Bithynia, Paphlagonia, Lycaonia, Pisidia and Isauria. All dealt with the problem of repressing entrepreuneurial violence in the montane regions of these provinces, and were part of an omnibus approach to the problem—all the laws were issued on the same day: 18 May 535. The main theatres of the violence were the regions immediately around Isauria. The types of violence involved shared a number of common characteristics: the use of violent force to coerce or intimidate peasants and other landowners to extort land, or services, from them; raiding directed against rivals that was marked by homicide and the 'rape' of wives and daughters of personal enemies; and, lastly, the formation of armed refuges from which imperial tribute collection could be opposed, or from which part of the tribute could be appropriated by the lord himself[162]). The law on Lycaonia notes that it was a region of 'strong men' not far distant from Isauria. It also notes that it was a densely populated region well provided with horses, the main resource of mobile raiding; and that the violent men of the region were especially skilled in the use of the bow and arrow. Such men were harsh, ready for raiding, and prone to violent conflict. The result is that they had very little regard for the military or civil administration of the central state. The emperor Justinian therefore approved a calculated policy of terror to bring these men back into line, and advised the governor to repress homicide, the kidnapping of wives and young unmarried girls, and to make widespread use of torture, if necessary, to return these men 'to their right mind.' The inroads made by these same barons on the imperial tribute revenues

162) Note the following instances: Nov 28.6 ('De Moderatore Hellenoponti' AD 535): governor is to take action to repress bandits, those using violent force, and those abducting women, property and cattle; he is also to see that the armed retainers of the lords, the so-called 'bandit hunters' (*latronum persecutores*) and enforcers (*violentiarum inhibitores*, *biocolytai*), are to be brought under control; Nov 29.5 ('De Praetore Paphlagoniae', AD 535) which contains virtually the same terms.

was a not inconsiderable part of the central government's concern[163]). The parallel legislation on Pisidia stresses the same factors as central to the government's actions, including, above all, the way in which the regional 'bandits' had been able to remove themselves from the imperial tribute system and even to take sizeable cuts of it for their own purposes. These regional barons, such as those nested on the top of 'Wolf's Head Mountain', were both an alternative locus of power and a refuge for bandits and 'knife men' who acted as their armed retainers[164]). The contemporary law regarding Isauria assumes the same conditions, and notes that extreme measures are needed so that such *privati* will not be able to harm the *fiscus*[165]).

Throughout these laws are terms which are systematically linked to those in other legislation of the period which assume the normal existence of bands of heavily-armed men (*exarmati*), men of violence (*violenti*), bandit-hunters (*latronum insecutores/persecutores*), and armed enforcers (*violentiarum inhibitores, biocolytai*), that is, private agents of violence who operated on either side of the law, as the situation demanded. Frequently they were found in the hire of the private barons whom the state itself was attempting to control; therefore it is perhaps not surprising to see that the Roman governors themselves were in the habit of hiring (or buying off) such men, despite repeated legal prohibitions against doing so[166]). In 548 Justinian was finally

---

163) Nov 25 ('De Praetore Lycaonia', AD 535): *pr* mentions the restoration of a formal provincial administration to the region; 1 'Virorum enim est fortium, regio et ab Isauria nullo intervallo distans. .facile ad asperiores insurgentium voluntates et arma tractantium prone', and 1.2 ' .ad meliorem mentem revocet', cf. 5 1 on the tributes.

164) Nov 24 ('De Praetore Pisidiae', AD 535); 1 mentions the rural *vici* or *pagi* in the region that 'seditiously' attack the imperial tributes, and the receivers of *latrones* and *sicarii*; 2. mentions, once again, the repression of homicides, the theft of married and unmarried women.

165) Nov 27 1-2 ('De Comite Isauriae', AD 535).

166) Nov 8.12 & 13 (AD 535), 128.21 (AD 545); 145 (AD 553); and 134.2 (AD 556), all tied to the repression of the 'strong man' type of raiding of goods and women noted above.

compelled to place all the plains zones surrounding Isauria (i.e. Pisidia, Lycaonia and Phrygia) under the unified command of a specially appointed *dux* who was to repress brigandage. But the actions of the soldiers involved in the repression were worse than the ravages of the brigands themselves, and so the command was ended in 553 in response to local appeals against the duke and his men[167]). These references, which take us to the mid-sixth century, are complemented by other obscure notices of a serious Isaurian war under the emperor Heraclius in the first half of the seventh century[168]). The clear and unmistakable implication of all these imperial measures is that Isauria remained, till the mid-seventh century, a zone of permanent dissidence within the empire and hardly, as some would have it, a region now brought within the confines of imperial power.

There are additional, general, peculiarities that mark the 'bandits' of Isauria in this period that contribute to our understanding of them as a type. All of them fit a pattern of appearance, of presentation. They are all portrayed as huge and impressive in their physical size and demeanour, and they put this hugeness into action in feats of sometimes unbelievable strength and violence. The 'bandits' were able to demonstrate their power by performing feats of great endurance, especially that of long-distance running through the mountains. In some cases, as for example that of Flavius Zenon, they are noted for strange peculiarities of their physique which allowed them to prove their superior strength (in Zenon's case, he had flexible knee-caps[169]). These notices could be classified as just so many literary *leitmotive*—the sort of epic bombast required of the genre; but they should not. They make perfectly good sense as essential attributes required of any man who wished to become a 'leader' in

167) Nov 145 (553) which also mentions the phenomenon of uncontrolled soldiers turning to banditry, as does *Edict.* 8.2 (AD 548).

168) Minor (1979) 127n60 from the Suda; a notice of some significance, given the general paucity of sources for the period.

169) *Anon. Val.* 9 40; Indakos Kottunes was a spectacular long-distance runner· Suid. 1.368; 10.200; Lilingis and others were frightening men because of their excessive violence.

the sort of social structure that prevailed in Isauria throughout antiquity. In the type of stateless and fragmented structure in which they existed, such men had to be strongmen in a rather literal sense, capable of demonstrating their strength and reputation for violence, if in fact they were to become 'big men'[170]). Even when transported to the courtly milieu of Constantinople, a man like Illous continued to act out his role of personal strongman: he gained renown for his 'service to the Roman state', significantly, because of his courage in warfare, his personal munificence, and his acts as a 'man of justice'[171]). Yet another behaviour typical of these strongmen was their propensity to raid, snatch, and to keep the women, especially the wives, of opposing leaders. The presence of this peculiar form of *raptus* is a hallmark of one type of disintegrated society; it is, in a sense, the bellicose counterpart to the more civil connection of close-kin intermarriage between families[172]). The war-like actions performed in the seizure of a (potential) enemy's women played on the damage that could be done to the honour and standing of the opponent by the despoliage of his womenfolk, and by the use of them as hostages. Conversely, the same action also opened up the possibility of forming an alliance by compelling negotiations that would turn the violent act of seizure into a civil one of intermarriage. The situation was one where the *raptor* held the upper hand since his continued possession and, sometimes, sexual invasion of the woman's person, would only bring great dishonour, shame and lowered status to her

---

170) M. Sahlins outlined the structural needs and limitations of this type of leadership in his classic paper, "Poor Man, Rich Man, Big-Man, Chief: Political Types in Melansia and Polynesia", *CSSH*, 5 (1963) 285 = S. W Schmidt, J C. Scott, C. Landé & L. Guasti, eds., *Friends, Followers and Factions: A Reader in Political Clientelism*, Berkeley (1977) 230-31.

171) Candidus, F 1 = *FHG*, iv, p. 136.

172) Hence it is also characteristic of early 'feudal' European social formations: G Duby, *The Knight, the Lady and the Priest: the Making of Modern Marriage in Medieval Europe*, New York (1983) 220 f., R. V Colman, "The Abduction of Women in Barbaric Law", *Florilegium* 5 (1983) 62-75; for an interpretation of the moral norms and their material background see N Elias, *The Civilizing Process, 2: Power and Civility*, transl. E. Jephcott, Oxford (1982) 78-83

family and its friends unless they could regularize her status by a recognized marriage. The practice, therefore, not only reveals something of social relations in Isauria in the period, but is also a hallmark of the type of social structure in the region.

V Conclusion. Dangerous Neighbours

The montane zone of Cilicia-Isauria, in all time periods in which one can investigate it, reveals certain uniformities in its history as a self-regulating society, or as one notionally incorporated within the larger imperial states of the ancient world. Perhaps the most striking feature of this relationship is the long tradition of autonomy the region was able to maintain. During most of the period of the high Roman empire Isauria was a zone of permanent dissidence located wholly within the outer frontiers of the empire. Matched with this political autonomy was an unusually strong sense of the ethnic identity of the *Kietai*, marked especially by the continuity in a bedrock linguistic tradition of the Luwian languages which were the bearer of Kietan culture over the whole of antiquity[173]). Even the ruling élites were immune to imperial acculturation; as late as the fourth and fifth centuries AD their nomenclature was still Luwian (though they did deign to parade Greek names if they left the region). One must suspect that *a fortiori* the same immunity was shared, perhaps to a greater degree, by the majority of the common people of the region. This cultural autonomy was not guaranteed by any centralized political power in the mountains; indeed, the evidence from all of antiquity speaks only of disparate and isolated dynasts, jealously independent, resident in their fortified castles, who related to one another by the use of physical violence and displays of power, and by marshalling the resources of kinship and friendship. This political situation in the

---

173) Houwink ten Cate, *Luwian Population Groups*, 190-92; and G. Neumann, "Kleinasien", (in) G Neumann & J Untermann, *Die Sprache im römischen Reich der Kaiserzeit*, Beihefte der Bonner Jahrbücher Bd. 40, Bonn (1980) 167-85

mountains appears to have formed an unbroken continuity of power over the whole of antiquity, and holds true even for the relatively brief 'window' between the early to mid-second and early third centuries AD when the Roman state had the greatest potential of exerting an external central control over the highlands. The Isaurian tyrants were therefore left to their own traditional devices and behaved towards each other according to certain ritualized norms. In default of any state mechanisms, these were also the only means by which they could relate to outsiders, including the Romans. The repertoire of social devices comprised forms of personal friendship modelled on kinship, confirmed by symbolic acts such as the common meal, the ritual kiss and the exchange of hands; the periodic use of violence (or threat of it) to maintain the relationship, and the exchange of gifts, services, resources and hostages to guarantee the understanding.

The links which these men of power were able to negotiate with lowland states were variants of the internal relationships that they had with each other. They were of a highly personal type that belonged to an archaic system of power that was logically and historically prior to state power in the Mediterranean. Probably the paramount symbol, and the most obvious physical manifestation, of this prior system of kin power is the castle—the family fortified. Indeed, personal strongholds are such a logical part of the system that one can reasonably argue from the material evidence of *castella* to the probable existence of this type of power. It was the way that Pliny characterized the world of the Homanadeis: 'forty-four castles hiding among harsh and rugged mountain valleys'[174]). The principal reason why this political 'fossil' survived quite successfully, not only within the frame of the Roman empire, but subsequently well into modern times, seems to be the simple fact of a dominant form of topography, that of mountain over plain, which enabled the inhabitants of the highlands effectively to assert their autonomy That is why central

174) Pliny, *NH*, 5.94.23

states so consistently preferred a form of indirect control that relied on the more primitive power-type of personal obligation. As the imperial geographer Strabo phrased it, in summarizing the Roman position regarding Isauria in his day: 'The region is by nature well suited to banditry both on land and sea—on land because of the size of the mountains and the size of the ethnic groups in the highlands, and the plains and extensive farmlands in the region which are open and exposed to raids; on sea because of the supply of wood for building ships, the anchorages, the fortified outlooks, and the hidden inlets. It seemed best, in view of all of this, that these places be ruled indirectly rather than by Roman governors sent out to administer justice, since the latter could not be present at all times with armed forces'[175]). The alternatives to the indirect personal linkages are clearly expressed by Strabo. Permanent control would require a permanent administrative presence in the region, as well as the deployment of massive military resources. Given the intransigence of the mountain peoples, so well evoked by Cicero, permanent occupation might have to be backed up by two deeper responses. If the highlanders still eluded direct control by the central state, recourse might have to be had to more brutal 'total' solutions—the eradication of the source of the problem, the people themselves, either by genocide, or by mass deportations and resettlement. When the Roman state did, at various times, reach the point of direct intervention in the mountain zones of southeastern Anatolia, both solutions were attempted, but only partially, and never on the scale or duration necessary to to produce the desired result. Violence therefore tended to resolve itself into a form of unending 'trench warfare' that became routinized as part of the normal relations between mountain and plain.

175) Strabo 14.5.6 (C671): εὐφυοῦς γὰρ ὄντος τοῦ τόπου πρὸς τὰ λῃστήρια καὶ κατὰ γῆν καὶ κατὰ θάλατταν (κατὰ γῆν μὲν διὰ τὸ μέγεθος τῶν ὀρῶν καὶ τῶν ὑπερκειμένων ἐθνῶν...κατὰ θάλατταν δὲ διὰ τὴν εὐπορίαν τῆς τε ναυπηγησίμου ὕλης καὶ τῶν λιμένων καὶ ἐρυμάτων καὶ ὑποδυτηρίων), ἐδόκει πρὸς ἅπαν τὸ τοιοῦτο βασιλεύεσθαι μᾶλλον τοὺς τόπους, ἢ ὑπὸ τοῖς Ῥωμαίοις ἡγεμόσιν εἶναι τοῖς ἐπὶ τὰς κρίσεις πεμπομένοις, οἳ μήτ' ἀεὶ παρεῖναι ἔμελλον μήτε μεθ' ὅπλων

These types of behaviour continued to characterize the relations between mountain and plain, between highland lords and the lowland state, in this region of Anatolia well into modern times. The detailed record of the relationships between the lords, the Derebeys, of Cilicia and the Ottoman state to the mid-nineteenth century is essentially a replay of all the factors noted in the ancient case of the Isaurians. The Derebeys (the Turkish work has the connotation of 'bully, despot or tyrant') were labelled *saki*, meaning 'outlaw' or 'bandit', by the central Ottoman government. The litany of characteristics that typified this relationship are too similar to the ancient case to be dismissed as mere happenstance. The Derebeys' power was based in the mountains of Isauria; and the locus of Ottoman attacks on them was the Adana plain where the governor resided, at Tarsus. The Derebeys' power flowed from the personal violence they exercized in the mountains, and with which they threatened the surrounding plains. In periods of negotiated co-operation with the central government they were used as middlemen who served the Ottomans for purposes of tribute collection and military recruitment. But in any given circumstance, the Derebeys were just as likely to take an independent course of action and to engage in homicide, pillage, kidnapping and other violent acts, as well as making massive inroads of their own into what was nominally the central government's tribute.

The final closure of this system by the Ottoman central state began to be effected by 1865, after which point the type of independence represented by the Derebeys was no longer possible. Nevertheless, the process of incorporation was a lengthy one that took the last half of the nineteenth century to complete. It was achieved on the one hand by the 'gelding' or taming of the lords by a massive absorption of them within the bureaucratic structure of the state via the granting of 'offices' to the highland lords, offices that had substantial emoluments attached to them. Also decisive in this closure, however, was the simple fact of superior armed force based on the greater mobility of the central state's military and its possession of modern

technologies of firepower. But there can be little doubt the typology of the Derebeys as a political force. They were not 'social bandits' or the like. 'The Derebeys... were popular heroes only in the dramatic sense of the[ir] minstrel tales... [they] were heroes in the struggle of local autonomy against central control... [and] provided colorful material for minstrel tales with their eccentric behavior and defiance of central authority, but they were not champions of the oppressed or primitive revolutionaries. They were members of tribal nobility who had become alienated from Istanbul over the centuries and had acquired control of southern Anatolia partly for profit and partly out of love of freedom'[176]).

Arms and armed conflict were therefore decisive parts of both the ancient and modern confrontations in Isauria, but so were 'treaties' or agreements. And the latter sometimes cost the lowland states or better their governments, not just in men and material expended to control the highlands or in its concession of guarantees and hostages, but also in cold cash—a reverse economic exchange of the type we know occurred not infrequently as part of an entrenched policy towards 'external barbarians'[177]). Eustathios of Epiphaneia (at the edge of the Adana plain in the east) and John of Antioch, who ought to have known, speak of an annual tribute of some thousands of pounds of gold that was paid out every year to the highland barons of Isauria by the Roman state in the time of Anastasios[178]).

---

176) For all this material see A. G Gould, *Pashas and Brigands: Ottoman Provincial Reform and Its Impact on the Nomadic Tribes of Southern Anatolia, 1840-1885*, PhD Dissertation, UCLA, 1973; and his "Lords or Bandits? The Derebeys of Cilicia", *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 7 (1976) 485-506; the quotations are from pp. 505-06 of the article.

177) Part of this whole response, the internal resettlement of 'barbarians' on imperial lands, a surrogate form of land claim, is only beginning to receive the attention it deserves, see G E. M. de Ste. Croix, *The Class Struggle in the Ancient Greek World...*, London (1981) append. iii, 'The settlement of 'barbarians' within the Roman empire', 509-18.

178) John of Antioch F.5.30 (1400 pounds); Evagrius, *Hist. Eccl.* 3.35 = Eustathios, F.6 = *FHG*, iv, 142 (5000 pounds).

We need not assume that the dichotomy between mountain and plain was absolute as it is pictured in cultural terms by lowland literary sources. There were commonplace 'economic' exchanges taking place all the time. Whereas it is true that highland gangs were involved in frequent raiding of lowlands settlements, it is also the case that they seem to have provided soldiers for the regular Roman army, or, as another part of this same spectrum of service, armed retainers and enforcers for wealthy landowners, including church bishops and imperial officials[179]). Then again, there is no evidence to support the proposition that the highland communities resisted every form of cultural influence. Whereas the fact of language, as was stated at the beginning of this essay, remains relatively constant in the face of the Graeco-Latin civilisation of the lowland cities, other parameters of the 'mental world' were not as fixed[180]). The highlands seem to have been perfectly permeable by new forms of art and architecture, to other stylistic influences, and to new types of belief. It was once postulated that the rise of local Isaurian barons to positions of power in the outside Roman world in the last half of the fifth-century AD was concurrent with a revival of local 'paganism' and a plan to reverse the impact of the dominant lowland belief system[181]). But most of the leaders of the Isaurian rise to power of the period whose religious backgrounds and preferences are known seem to have subscribed to some type of Christianity. And the situation reflected in the life and miracles of Thekla seems to assume that both the

---

179) There were long-term patterns in this service. Cilician 'mercenaries' had served in Egypt at least from the Ptolemaic period, and it can hardly be accidental that Cilicians continued to serve there in the first centuries AD, as part of the Roman army; see the *cohors I Cilicum* and *cohors I Flavia Cilicum*, P A. Holder, *Studies in the Auxilia of the Roman Army from Augustus to Trajan*, Oxford, BAR International Series no. 70 (1980) catalogue nos. 1310-13

180) The continuity of language is assured not only by the epigraphy of the highlands, but also by the continued use of local nomenclature, even by the wealthy and powerful of the region (whom we would otherwise expect to have been in the front line of acculturation).

181) Thompson (1946) 28-29, and esp. 29 n. 36, proffered this hypothesis, drawing attention to the role of the pagan 'philosopher' Pamprepios.

'civilised' of the cities and the highland 'bandits' accepted Christianity and the holiness of the saint's shrine as a common fact[182]). In both the artistic form and construction design of their religious centres, the Isaurians of the period (e.g. those at Isaura Nova and Vetus) reveal a deep Christian influence, even if it did take a distinctive local style[183]). The many ecclesiastical sites that have been noted and studied as part of archaeological surveys of the region have not revealed any peculiarities of design or construction that would mark them as 'Isaurian'[184]).

We are therefore dealing with a separate reality, one that has its own four-thousand year history during the period of the great civilizations of East and West—a history that is principally one of the autonomy of the region concerned. In order to understand that history better we must surely attempt to see part of it from the perspective of the Kietai themselves, rather than of the central states that attempted so unsuccessfully to dominate them over those four millennia. Their history, if viewed from the perspective of the state, seems like one of central domination that is broken by sporadic and definable periods of unrest and secession. But that is a delusion, and one that has serious consequences for our evaluation of the documentary evidence[185]). The better approach to the problem, surely, is to

---

182) See the conclusion of Dagron, *Vie et miracles*, 120-21, citing the situation reflected in *Mir* 5 & 27

182) A. M. Ramsay, "The Early Christian Art of Isaura Nova", *JHS*, 24 (1904) 260-92, shorn of her despairing remarks about the quality of the 'native' or 'indigenous' art of the region (by comparison with the 'superior' Greek forms) is valuable because she demonstrates convincingly both the development and long-term continuity (to the early twentieth century) of a local artistic tradition in Isauria and its integration with Hellenistic forms imported into the region on a large scale, especially with the spread of Christianity; cf. her "Isaurian and East Phrygian Art in the Third and Fourth Centuries after Christ", (in) W M. Ramsay, ed., *Studies in the History and Art of the Eastern Provinces of the Roman Empire*, London (1906) 3-58.

184) A. C. Headlam, *Ecclesiastical Sites in Isauria (Cilicia Trachea)*, Supplementary Papers of the Society for the Promotion of Hellenic Studies, no. 1 (1893); M. Gough, "Early Churches in Cilicia", *Byzantinoslavica*, 2 (1955) 201-11, R. W Edwards, "Two New Byzantine Churches in Cilicia", *AS* 32 (1982) 23-32.

185) For example, we think that we can 'date' our sources by correlating them with specific periods of Isaurian secessionism or violence. It is a method used by

concede the operative fact of long term Isaurian autonomy and to seek precisely what type of 'independence' it was. In a world were the genuinely independent hardly existed, where one was either subject or ruler, the sort of situation enjoyed by the Isaurians was quite simply one where they did not operate under the constraint of others; in a narrow political sense it meant that the local men of power in Isauria did not have to pay tribute or show other signs of social dishonour if they did not care to do so. But what this lack of political domination meant in ideological terms is much more difficult to assess. Certainly, as already indicated, it meant the preservation of an ethnic, cultural and linguistic tradition, though this identity of the Kietai surely resulted more by default than by a conscious policy of political autonomy. There was no hermetically sealed frontier in this or any other sense. Economic exchanges, and a permeation of ideas, continued unabated. Indeed, the penetration of Christianity into the region may have presented a more formidable challenge to local

---

Dagron and by Syme, and one which seems highly questionable. See R. Syme, "Isauria", ch. 9 (in) *Ammianus and the Historia Augusta*, (1968) 43-42. His claim (p. 43) that the mountain zone 'had defied the armies of all empires *until the time of Caesar Augustus*' is curious, since there is no reason to find any armed control of Isauria either in Augustus' reign or thereafter He further sees this control as lasting *until* the time 'when Ammianus was writing' when 'a large art of the interior had broken loose from the control of the Roman government.' Finally, on the basis of the correlation of the picture of a violent and autonomous Isauria in the *SHA* and similar reports in Ammianus Marcellinus, Syme (p. 48-49) doubts all the SHA reports on Isauria, on Trebellianus, and on Palfuerius. 'Three passages thus bring in Isauria, each redolent of fraud.' Actually, there are only two such passages, and it is difficult to see why they should be labelled as fraudulent, except for the prior assumption that the affairs reported in them are somehow exceptionally characteristic of the late fourth century AD, and therefore represent a current invention. Dagron, in his *Vie et miracles*, 115 ff, uses the same method to date certain 'mises-en-scène' in the miracles—by attempting to correlate the 'known facts' about Isauria (specifically those few particular ones known from the surviving books of Ammianus) with indications of similar problems in the miracles. Not only are many of the parallels adduced rather dubious as parallels, there is, again, no reason to believe that the incidents concerned could be distinguished in any reliable way from similar ones that had occurred repeatedly throughout the long-term history of the region.

culture (viz. its language) than did any putative conversion of local élites.

It is especially in their contact with the forces of the Roman state, and in the period of the surrounding of Isauria by its frontiers, that the dynasts of the highlands are found labelled as *latrones* or the like. It is perhaps a beginning to note that the barons of Isauria appear as 'bandits' only at precise junctures in our sources, all of which are written from the perspective of central states attempting to dominate the region. Paradoxically, it is only when central states are strong or are attempting to re-assert their strength that the reaction of labelling the independent men of power in Isauria as *latrones* is found. In periods of weakness, central states reacted to these same Isaurians either by dealing with them as relatively autonomous agents, or by attempting to co-opt them and their resources by deploying networks of personal obligation. Since the term 'bandit' appears as a blatant form of statist labelling, one must extract the mundane reality behind the stigma. As I have argued elsewhere, banditry is a mirror type of anti-state power that is generated coterminously with the rise of the state itself[186]). It is determined and defined by the central state, although, as in Isauria, the substance of 'bandit power' may have its roots in prestate forms and represent a 'fossil' continuity of 'untamed' or 'ungelded' men of power[187]). The reality, therefore, was a form of violent personal power that operated within the cultural confines of given ethnic groups as a brutal politics of self-interest. One form it took, a particularly virulent one, was created by the marriage of this type of power and montane topography. The symbiosis led to the formation of 'bandit-areas' within the Roman empire that were at once ethnic refuges from central-state power and possible retreats for fugitives from the state's domination. Isauria represents one of the more interesting case studies of this type of power from

186) B. D Shaw, "Bandits in the Roman Empire", *P&P*, 105 (1984) 3-52.

187) The imagery is that of E. Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, Oxford (1983) 14 f.

antiquity, and illustrates the seriousness of the alternatives it presented to external forces, even those of the magnitude of Rome, when the technological powers available to the modern absolutist state were missing.